FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

Volume 27, No. 6 115p

THE RENDLESHAM FOREST MYSTERY

See page 4

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW
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A RECORD PUT STRAIGHT

OUR reader H. S. Taylor performed a very worthwhile task by raising a query about some of the details given in our Editorial leader relating to the classic sighting by BOAC *Stratocruiser* skipper Captain James Howard, his crew, and many passengers over Labrador on June 29, 1954. His letter prompted us to trace Captain Howard and, thankfully, to obtain a report from him — as far as he recalls — of the event. We are grateful to him for his help, and his report appears as a short article on page 2. Thus, we hope, is the record put straight.

Before proceeding we must point out that the Labrador story was chosen because, *as we knew it,* it was a remarkable multi-percipient/radar-visual case, with witnesses of the highest integrity. It thus served to illustrate the point we wished to make in the Volume 27, No. 3 Editorial, that the prime witness was hardly likely to conjure up figments of his imagination and project them in such a way that Traffic Control could trace them miles ahead of the aircraft; again in such a way that his co-pilot, navigator, cabin staff and passengers could see them in their flight path four miles on the port side of the aircraft. The correct version of this case is still an admirable illustration to the point we wished to make.

We now know we had the distance wrong between the locality where Captain Howard was ordered to "hold", and the point where he first saw the objects. Furthermore, we see that we had a very wrong impression regarding the responses on the *Sabre's* nose radar in that only the *Stratocruiser's* trace was recorded. We also had the cloud formations not quite right. It can only be suggested that your Editor's memory of what Captain Howard told him and his friends and colleagues in 1965 is none too good. The occasion of the meeting was a private dinner at which the pilot was the guest, and as he was still flying at the time, and therefore under official constraint, we respected his position and refrained from recording what he had to say.

The BOAC *Stratocruiser* case is a classic, but it also held our interest because it featured in our very first issue in 1955, Volume 1, No. 1 — which was well before your present Editor's association with *Flying Saucer Review* had begun. Unfortunately the author of the item, Leonard Cramp, gave only a sparse account of the event, and concentrated thereafter on Captain Howard's knee-pad sketches of the shape-changing object and its attendant small "saucers" (Cramp's description), and on his (Cramp's) speculations and interpretation of the phenomenon.

So your Editor regrets the misinformation he unwittingly fed into his Editorial leader of FSR Volume 27, No. 3. However, he would like to ask readers to recall one point he made in that leader: "We knew about this case for the simple reason that it avoided the official clamp-down because the many passengers who saw the UFOs were not bound by the restric-

tions." We should not overlook the fact, therefore, that the pilot of the F-94 and his companion were bound hand and foot by the official constraints that followed the sitting, and deliberations, of the Robertson Commission of January 1953. So it is conceivable that even if they had had the images of the UFOs on their radar scope, they would in no way have made that information public.

The official constraint is a very real thing as far as both civil and military pilots are concerned. Your Editor has given talks to womens' clubs where the members' husbands have come along as guests — very knowledgeable husbands who have taken the speaker aside after the talk and have confided over a beer that they were airline pilots, that they were with him 100% but would go in fear of their jobs if they spoke about their experiences.

To conclude, the New England-Labrador BOAC incident should, we feel, still go on record — in view of the "hold" instruction from Boston Traffic Control — as a multi-witness/probable radar case.

THE B.O.A.C. LABRADOR SIGHTING OF 1954

The pilot recalls the remarkable events of 28 years ago!

James Howard

I was in command of BOAC Stratocruiser G-ALSC, operating flight No. 510-196 from New York to London, on June 29, 1954. I had elected to make a refuelling stop at Goose Bay, Labrador — a routine procedure.

We departed New York at 2103 GMT (5.03p.m. Eastern Daylight Time). About 30 mins later, when nearing the boundary between New York Air Traffic Centre and Boston Air Traffic Centre, Boston told me to hold at a position somewhere near the coast of Rhode Island (I've forgotten the exact place). No reason given, but I assumed that there was conflicting traffic ahead. I might say that it was, and is, very unusual to be "held" when outbound from a busy area.

After perhaps 10-12 minutes I pointed out to Boston that my fuel reserves were not limitless, and requested onward clearance. Control then said that I could proceed if I would accept a detour via Cape Cod, rejoining the original track well north of Boston. I accepted this and we proceeded on our way.

About 3 hours later we were crossing the St Lawrence estuary near Seven Islands, Quebec. We were flying at 19,000ft., above broken cloud at possibly 14,000ft., with the coastline clearly visible through gaps in the cloud.

I then saw these objects for the first time. They were moving at about the same speed as we were (230 knots approx) on a parallel course, maybe 3 or 4 miles to the north west of us (we were heading N.E.). They were below the cloud at this time, at a guess at 8,000ft. Soon after crossing the coast into Labrador, the cloud layer was left behind and the objects were now clearly in view, seeming to have climbed more nearly to our altitude. At this time the sun was low to the north-west, sky clear, visibility unlimited. There was a small amount of low cloud, near the ground

> Our reader H. S. Taylor (see "Mail Bag") draws our attention to discrepancies between the details of the famous 1954 incident, given in our editorial leader in Volume 27, No. 3, and a version published in *Fate* magazine "a few months after the incident." We have been fortunate enough to locate Captain Howard — now retired — and he, having read Mr. Taylor's letter has recorded for us the details, as he recalls them, of the event of more than a quarter of a century ago. Readers should also refer to our editorial leader on page 1 of this issue. EDITOR

The crew and I had ample time to study and sketch these "things" as they flew with us for some 20 minutes in all. The passengers, I found out later, had also seen them and were staring out of the windows on the port side.

There was one large object and six small globular things. The small ones were strung out in a line, sometimes 3 ahead and 3 behind the large one, sometimes 2 ahead and 4 behind, and so on, but always at the same level. The large object was continually, slowly, changing shape, in the way that a swarm of bees might alter its appearance. They appeared to be opaque and hard-edged, grey in colour, no lights or flames visible.

After watching these things for 10 minutes or so I judged that we were now within VHF radio range of Goose Bay, and could talk to them. I asked Lee Boyd,

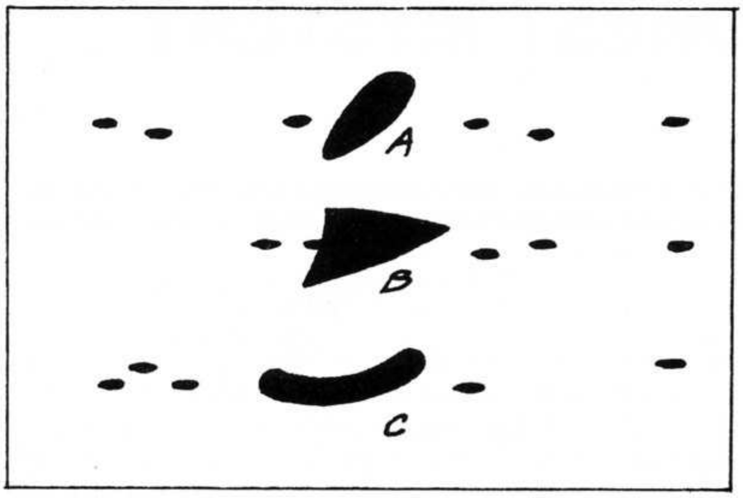


Figure 1

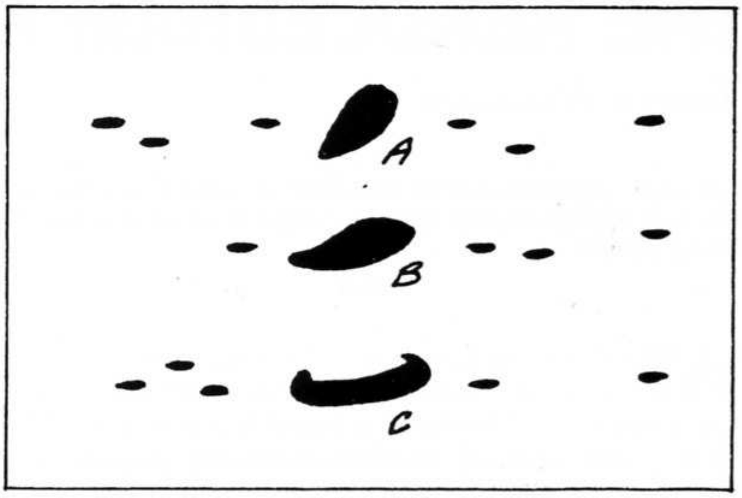


Figure 2

Some aspects of Captain Howard's sketches of the shape-changing object, and its "attendants", as drawn by Leonard Cramp for FSR Volume 1, No. 1 (Spring 1955).

my co-pilot, to ask Goose Bay for information. They asked us to describe what we were seeing, and told us that they had an F.94 on patrol and would vector him towards us. (The F94 was a radar equipped two seat fighter). A little later Goose Bay asked us to change frequency and talk direct to the fighter. On doing so we learned that he had us in radar contact — no mention of anything else visible. I gave him a bearing of the objects from us, and as I did so I noticed that the small objects had disappeared. (My Navigator who was watching them closely at this time said that they appeared to converge on, and enter, the large one).

At about this time the sun set in the north-west.

As the fighter approached, the large object dwindled in size, still on the same relative bearing from us, and after a few more seconds, disappeared.

I then had to start the descent into Goose Bay where we landed at 0145 GMT.

We were questioned at length by USAF Intelligence at Goose Bay (who, incidentally, seemed totally unsurprised at the sighting — they told us there had been several others in the Labrador area recently).

We left Goose Bay at 0314 GMT for London, arriving at 1227 on the 30th.

On this leg I wrote the voyage report. At that time I did not connect the unusual "hold" in the Boston area with the sighting because of the discrepancy in time and distance. It was only after receiving many letters about the sighting — including one from a doctor and his wife who were on holiday in Massachusetts, and saw a number of objects flying overhead in a North-Easterly direction at about the time that we were being held — that a possible connection became evident.

(Incidentally — the sketches that the doctor made were very similar to those that I made.)

Referring to Mr Taylor's letter again, regarding radar. At that time Goose Bay had only short-range airfield control radar; we were too far away to be detected by that. The F94 did not report having sighted the objects on his radar equipment. We had left Goose Bay for London before the fighter returned so I had no opportunity to question the F94 crew.

If the 'hold' was because of unidentified traffic in the Boston control area, then that would imply radar contact.

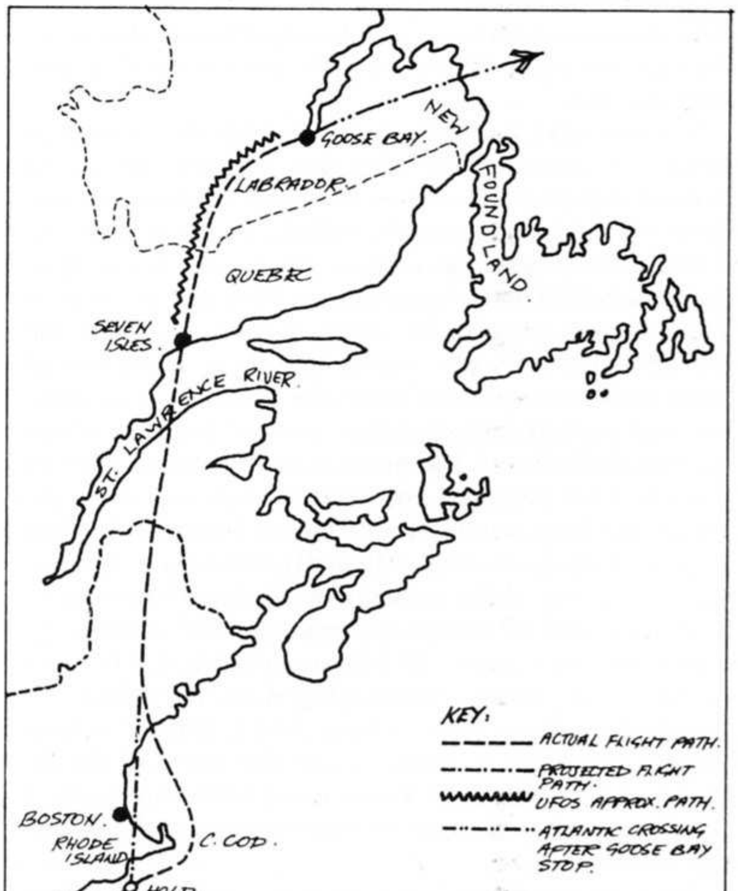


Figure 3: Captain Howard's flight path, showing projected route, holding area, diversion and the UFO's approximate route.

THE RENDLESHAM FOREST MYSTERY

Jenny Randles

The case reported herein was first alluded to by the author in a "late item" which found its way into Volume 26, No. 6 of *Flying Saucer Review* (page iii of cover) and fuller details were promised in due course. Here then are those details.

WHEN reading the works of Leonard Stringfield, for example "Retrievals of the Third Kind" in FSR Volume 25, Numbers, 4, 5 and 6, and of Charles Berlitz, *The Roswell Incident* (Granada paperback 1982), one wonders why the alleged UFO crashes always occur in America, and always in deserts. Why, indeed, have they never occurred in more recent years. One is forced to conclude that we would never get such a tale in dear old conservative Britain. Or would we?

Where there's smoke there's fire — or more smoke!

In February 1981 I received a phone-call from East Anglian author Paul Begg. Paul, best known for his *Thin Air* book (a praiseworthy sceptical examination of mysterious vanishings), looks for answers, not speculations. So what he had to tell me sounded worth checking out.

It seems that Paul and his wife had met a man in their local village pub who was slightly known to them, and presumably knew of Paul's interests. He decided to relate an episode which, he said, had occurred a few weeks previously (we *think* on Tuesday, December 30, 1980). According to him, the civil radar establishment where he worked had on that day tracked a UFO. It was night, and their base (one of many such systems that litter the strategic East Anglian region) had recorded this unusual target heading towards Suffolk and the general region to the east of Ipswich. This man had not been on duty when the incident had happened, but his friend had, and he had got the story from him. Allegedly the target was reported to other radar systems on the south east coast (both civil and military) and was checked against all known air movements. It was uncorrelated. This was the only part their station played in the affair (although they knew other places had recorded it too). But they were left in doubt about the status of the incident when the US Air Force came along a couple of days later and took away the tapes of the radar trackings of this UFO.

Being in a sensitive area viz-a-viz the Official Secrets Act readers will appreciate we cannot name this "witness." But he did agree to talk to us, and, thanks to Paul, UFOIN members Kevin McClure (a specialist in sorting out rumours) and Peter Warrington (our most experienced radar case investigator) checked with him. The story, as verifiable as it can be, was as I have given. One rider added was that they were led to believe, by the USAF people who collected the tapes, that the "anomaly" had landed not far from Woodbridge Air Force Base (indeed it was suggested even *on* the base), and that a metallic craft, plus entities, was encountered. Electromagnetic effects on a military jeep which approached the site were also claimed.

So, we had ourselves a rumour of an extraordinary story, but little more than that. Merely anecdotal, "a friend of a friend told me" type stuff, from which one can hardly build mountains. Was there smoke behind the smoke, or a glimmering of a real fire? All we knew was that the radar man *seemed* to be telling the truth, and had no obvious reason to lie about this. Then came news which changed everything.

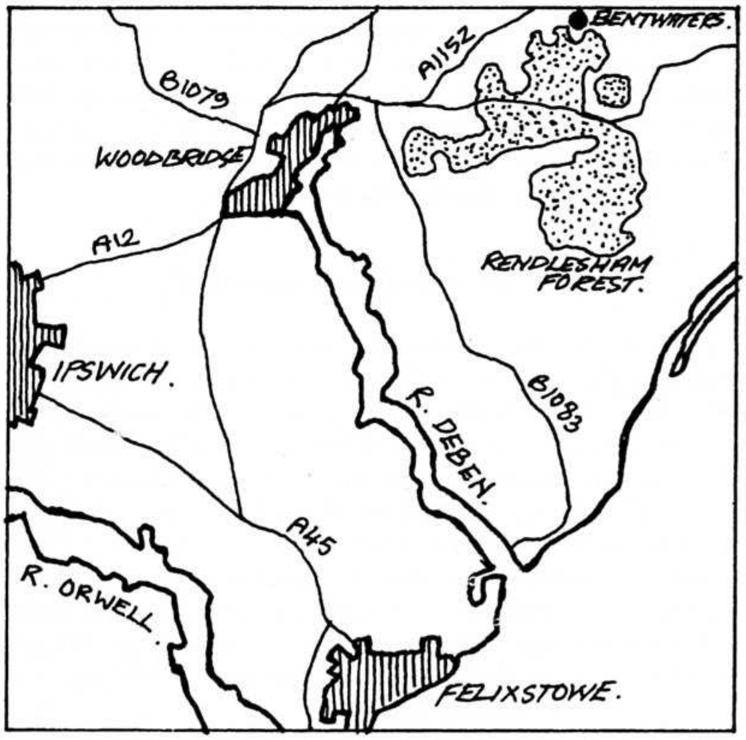
The wonder of Woodbridge

Norman Oliver was at that time (February 1981) still editor of *BUFORA Journal*. As such he picked up stories from all over the world. One day, about this time, he received a half-garbled account from the USA that "something big" had happened at Woodbridge around the turn of the year. The gist of the rumour was the same. The difference was that this came from a US serviceman now back in the States who, possibly, thus felt more free to talk.

This was all rather interesting, but not half as interesting as what was going on, unbeknownst to the rest of us, in rural Suffolk itself. When I called Bob Easton (the nearest UFOIN member to the Woodbridge base . . . though still many miles away in Essex) I intended to tell him of the story, but he told me of the Norman Oliver aspect, and that local BUFORA investigators were on to it as well, *and* finding things out!

These local investigators were Brenda Butler — who was closest, in Leiston, about 10 miles north of the area in question — and her friend Dot Street, based twenty miles further north in Lowestoft. The two young women covered a vast, mostly rural area, more or less on their own. Suffolk is such a low-density population region that it has never generated many investigators, although it certainly has generated some intriguing UFO sightings (underlining the well-attested rule that interesting close encounters are in inverse proportion to the population density). One recalls the classic radar/visual case of August

1956 (usually known as the Lakenheath case, since most of the multiple ground and air sightings and radar trackings involved that base, although Bentwaters USAF base was initially involved too, and Bentwaters, whilst a USAF-leased base, is alongside Woodbridge, the subject of our 1980 case). This Lakenheath R/V is still regarded as one of the two or three best cases in UFO history. It has defied attempts to solve it and really *must* have set our Ministry of Defence thinking very seriously about UFOs — if they were not already so doing. Indeed many internal sources have told me that is so.



Location in East Anglia of Rendlesham Forest.

Dot and Brenda had picked up the story on their own initiative, and were chasing it with some haste, as indeed they are *still* doing in 1982). This sudden independent coming-together of *three* closely linked rumours, made us think very carefully that something might really be behind them all. Yet, despite the incredible nature of the information emerging, the media were *not* latching on to it. This seemed, and still seems, baffling. It is the kind of story any local newspaper would surely fight for. But aside from a local BBC interview which Brenda did in Autumn 1981 — which was not picked up nationally — and a London *Standard* reference to the case in May, there has not been any effort by the media to crack open this affair.

The London *Standard* piece emerged, in fact, from an interview with me, whilst I was promoting my then just-published book *UFO Study*. It was well done and factual, not exaggerating the story. It merely quoted from a half-page "progress report" I wrote at this point for FSR, *Military Contact Alleged at Air Base:* "At present it is impossible to say how much of this is fact and how much fiction generated by the inevitable stories that are sweeping the community."

Scene-set for an Encounter:

Rendlesham Forest is a large area of wooded land about eight miles north east of Ipswich and close to the coast. It is surrounded by little more than a few farms. The only habitation of any note is the village of Woodbridge at the western edge. The USAF bases lie some three or four miles to the north of the forest. Earth mystery lovers will no doubt be interested to know that there are tumulii, and a number of "ley" place names in the region. Should anybody want to land, the woods could be ideal. There are spots open enough for this to occur, while the woods themselves would afford cover. And the very desolate surroundings would certainly reduce the number of potential witnesses to a minimum.

The discovery of substance behind the shadow

Clearly crucial to an understanding of what, if anything, really happened, is the local follow up by Brenda Butler and Dot Street. Brenda prepared a multi-page report on their work in March 1981. She circulated a few copies, and I received one. It is somewhat confusing in that it suffers from being a personal description with no real chronology. None of the half-dozen witnesses cited in it are named, or even given any status other than Witness 1, 2 or 3 etc. I have talked with both Brenda and Dot in an effort to clarify what the report implies and I think I have this clear. What follows is a summary, with additional data that Brenda ventured to me during a January 1982 discussion.

It now transpires that Brenda discovered the incident within days of its having taken place, a month before the other rumours surfaced. Her informant was a personal friend at the USAF base, an officer who has confided UFO information to her before. On this occasion she was told not to discuss the matter publicly. Afraid, both for his sake, and because she wanted to get more inside information from him in future, she complied with his request. She only began to follow up when *other* sources informed her of the incident, and later when the existence of the Begg and Oliver rumours became known

The primary witness (the officer) claims that this is not the first incident of this magnitude which has happened in the vicinity of the base, although this was the most impressive as it involved *contact*. His story, told initially and confirmed on follow-up in February 1981, is as follows:

On December 30, 1980, a farmer in the vicinity of the forest called the base to advise them that he had just seen an aircraft crash into the Forest. The base

police went out to check on the claim and came back saying: "there's a UFO in the woods!" (This would be at an unspecified time, but at night. Someone from the base newspaper heard of this, and went to the scene armed with still and movie cameras, and in fact is said to have *filmed* the object on the ground! The base commander, meanwhile, ordered a high-level team to visit the site, involving himself, the chief of security police, and several other high-ranking officers. The base commander expressly forbade any of the group to take weapons with them. At the site the object was on the ground apparently damaged on the outside. Entities (three of them, about 3 feet tall, and in silvery suits) were suspended in mid air beside the craft within shafts of light. They were repairing their damaged craft. The base commander confiscated all the cameras from the Base press sources, and demanded a total news blackout. He himself (alone) spoke with the aliens whilst they worked. The object was on the ground for *four hours* before climbing to hover briefly over treetops and then shoot away at great speed. Next day an A10 aircraft was sent over the forest looking for radiation traces. They found some. Meanwhile all personnel on the base were issued with strict instructions not to discuss the affair publicly. This informant spoke to Brenda only on strictly confidential terms and even then refused to answer two specific questions viz: the precise shape of the landed craft, and the subjects discussed in conversation with the aliens.

Related anomalies?

At about this time, while Brenda was the only ufologist to know of this affair, a number of possibly related anomalies came to her notice which might well be of some interest. The first stemmed from a discussion she had with a man (not military) who is sometimes called into the base to do major electrical repairs. He, not knowing about the crash rumours, told the following tale, from supposedly the same time span, and *possibly* the same date:

The man was called to the base because the lights on the runway had all gone out . . . mysteriously. He was not told what had caused this . . . indeed the base refused to tell him! The weather was very cold and it was night. He was led to the runway to fix them, which he did, under an *armed guard* of six men. It was this he found most odd, because he has never been so treated on other visits to the base.

Brenda also discovered through her local information net — which does seem impressive — that forestry workers in Rendlesham had discovered a section of forest with the tops of trees scorched. They had reported this to the Air Base, and were told to keep it quiet although, presumably, they were not informed why.

On February 12, 1981, mystery bangs were allegedly heard in the area of the forest. One forestry worker tried to find out what these were, and was advised they were due to unexploded bombs being exploded on Orford Island — off the coast a few miles away. Brenda checked with the police but they did *not* confirm this explanation. Indeed they had none to offer. Three bangs were apparently heard at intervals of 20 minutes. This informant was asked if he knew anything about an object crashing into the woods. He agreed he did, but had been informed it was an aircraft. Since there had been no mention of this in the press he found it hard to believe.

An investigation is mounted

In view of the coalescing rumours that *something* had happened (a few other sources had advised her of an "aircrash") Brenda decided to act. She called Dot Street and gave her some information. They took the bull by the horns, called the base commander, and made an appointment to see him! This was at 4.00pm on February 18, seven weeks after the "crash". They asked the commander specific questions but he would not answer them. In return he queried them on their UFO knowledge. Ultimately they were told to contact the Ministry of Defence as all the Base UFO reports — certainly implying they had some — went to the Ministry. (It does seem to me that some unit in the USA must have been informed too.) Incidentally the MOD were contacted. They told Brenda that they ". . . did not know anything of such an incident" and advised her to contact the base commander!

According to the primary witness (the officer) this visit seems to have had some repercussions. The commander is said to have called a meeting of his officers in an effort to discover who had leaked the story. The "culprit" was not discovered, but one respected officer was allegedly shipped straight back to the USA. It is claimed that this was because suspicion fell on him that he was an "informant to ufologists." In view of these after-effects Brenda's decision not to disclose the names, or in some cases the nature of her information sources, was greatly strengthened.

From their meeting with the base commander, when they formed the distinct impression that he knew very well what they had been talking about, the two women went to the Forest. It was now growing dark, and they only knew the alleged landing area in a vague sense, but drove to where they thought it was. The forest is about three miles from the base, and they drove into it and along towards a clearing, close to the site. At this point Brenda goes on to describe a curious incident which may suffer from personalised interpretations and over imagination. Dot Street, however, confirms it did occur.

It seems the car suddenly began to vibrate. It accelerated, reaching 60/70 mph, and was quite out of control so far as Brenda, the driver, was concerned. Dot

was scared, and believing Brenda was doing it on purpose to frighten her, told her to stop. In the back seat was Brenda's eight-year-old Alsatian. It was whimpering and leaping about madly. After about half a mile the car suddenly stopped and the dog calmed down. The women were scared. (I was to discover by a curious synchronous coincidence — which is quite another story — that Brenda's dog has had a heart condition since birth and does suffer heart attacks periodically . . . these cause the dog to jump around until given medication. This may or may not be relevant, but should be mentioned as it is not in their report.)

While Brenda checked the car engine — finding nothing wrong with it — Dot saw a house on the edge of the woods, and went off to see if it was occupied. Brenda was none too keen on being left alone in the gathering gloom, and so tried to restart the car. It worked perfectly. She drove off after her colleague. At the house Dot was talking with two elderly gentlemen, and Brenda joined in the questioning.

These two men said there had been a great deal of military activity in the woods during the previous month or so. Their house lights had also flashed on and off at times and TV reception was poorer than normal. They knew nothing of a UFO or "crash".

They drove out of the forest the way they had come. They had had quite a debate as to whether they should risk this. They found an empty house, and met a man in a white car who thought ". . . we were doing a check of animals dying in the woods" which, apparently, is not as peculiar as it might sound, as most major woodlands have such periodic checks. On the way out the car began to vibrate, and the oil and ignition lights flashed on and off. It also skidded. Whilst the women clearly think this might be important, I am forced to wonder if an old car, on a rough track in winter, might not have a loose connection shaken about by the terrain? Not that I know much about cars!

A flood of witnesses

By now, thoroughly intrigued, the investigators did all they could to seek out the truth. In doing so they found several other "nameless" persons who ventured what they knew. In the main this complied with previous stories, and the Begg and Oliver rumours. Some features differed from the allegedly first-hand story, given to Brenda soon after the event, and it must be realised that these witnesses are passing on what they heard rather than what they saw. Some of the "detail" may thus be seen as icing sprinkled on to the cake by constant retelling and imagination. Also bear in mind that some of these people did not request anonymity. Brenda is merely giving it to them in view of the MOD and security associations of the affair.

Aspects of these three separate tales, coming primarily from airmen at the base, and which agree with the story so far, are these: Farmer made report; commander and high rank officers went out there; UFO had crashed, but was repaired; entities were seen; radiation and heat counts next day revealed traces, marks left on trees at site. Some aspects which differ, i.e. new elements in these three tales, are: As the UFO took off the ground beneath it glowed temporarily with intense heat; the UFO was on three legs separated by 30 feet each; the area was cordoned off for several days, and those enquiring were told that an aircraft had crashed, although no general news story to this effect was ever released; about two weeks after the incident the farmer who had first made the report told the base his cattle were playing up, and his lights and TV flashing. He was told merely that there had been an aircrash. But one of Brenda's contacts on the base insists ". . . there were no aircraft up that night."

It would seem from this that we must treat this latter batch of details, save the air-crash story which appears consistent, as rather more insubstantiated, and possibly fantasy. There does, however, seem to be a core aspect to the story. Note that the "EM effects on the jeep" feature, which came via the officers who took the radar tape, is *not* confirmed in any of the stories from the base.

A return to the woods

Brenda and Dot went back to Rendlesham Forest to check out the exact landing site, which had now been confirmed by one of the other base contacts. It was very close to where they had gone, by "accident", and where, allegedly, the car effects took place. The site was in a "restricted area" and it seems that it might be land owned by the base. They actually passed a sign which read: ENTRY ONLY BY PERMISSION OF THE BASE COMMANDER, BENTWATERS. However, they passed this to approach the Forestry Commission Office, and they discussed the case with two forestry officers who were there. They knew some details, but did not seem acquainted with *all* the features of the primary rumour. They added, from the subsidiary rumours, the bit about the farmer's cattle acting up, plus comment that the UFO was very brightly lit, and had been erratic on take-off. They were given permission to go to the site, but the area was under snow and they decided to put this off for a while. What they did do was to go in search of the farmer.

At the first smallholding, about half a mile from the forest, the farmer and his wife denied seeing anything, but said they had heard a UFO had come down on Woodbridge land. They also told them that two men had visited them, soon after the incident, looking for the farmer who had reported the event. The farmer's wife, incidentally, said there was only one man. The two forestry officials had previously told Brenda and Dot that one man had been asking them questions while searching for the farmer just two days after the

"crash" on New Year's Day 1981. They had no idea who he was. The farmer and his wife said they told the man — it could have been men — they presumed it was an aircraft that had come down. The man never returned . . . and guess what? He was dressed in a black suit!

The investigators found the farmer. He refused to talk to them. As they drove off he "eyed the car closely."

Through other sources, the ufologists followed up several reports of LITS seen in the Leiston area between December 27 and 30. One man in a pub told them he had seen a bright light one night during this period *over* Rendlesham Forest. He presumed it was an aircraft, but was slightly puzzled why it stayed in one spot for 20 minutes.

Ipswich and Woodbridge police were both contacted. Brenda says: "they definitely knew something," but shunted her back and forth with "you'll have to talk to the Base Commander . . . we can't tell you anything." They even tried to get the local newspaper interested. The Leiston office called the HQ in Ipswich with Brenda listening. They did not react as they normally do in such circumstances, telling the local reporter to check it out . . . they said: "Leave it!" Brenda and Dot believe that the press may have been prevented from following the case by application of pressure from official sources.

Brenda and Dot's second visit to the Forest was on February 24, 1981. On March 9 they called the Forestry Commission again and spoke to one of the two officers they had met earlier. He was abrupt and denied all knowledge of the incident! Through a contact in the Forestry service the women tried to get to the site, but they were told that "for some strange reason" this was not possible. The area in question had suddenly been burnt to the ground for no obvious reason. This was on February 26 . . . two days after their visit to the Forestry Commission Offices.

Paul Begg told me in London in October 1981 that he had run up against a brick wall of denials when he tried to check things out. Nobody admitted to knowing anything. Similarly, Bob Easton, the BUFORA Coordinator for Brenda and Dot's region, has met a barrage of denials and continual shuntings from person to person and office to office. He told me: "I think something genuinely *did* happen . . . but beyond that I can't go." At my request he and Andy Collins are hopefully going to visit the area to have another try.

What is the explanation?

I now know just how Berlitz and Len Stringfield (compiler of the original USA crash stories for his FSR series) must have felt. I am sure that Brenda and Dot are telling the truth. And I respect their reasons for maintaining anonymity of witnesses. This is a sensitive issue and the move is a wise one. I hope, however, these people willl be willing to talk with strictly vetted persons . . . and I think some of them will.

Did a UFO crash? An honest assessment of this case suggests, as incredible as it might seem, that there is at least a good possibility that the essence of the story is true. The whole thing does gell together rather well. So far as I can see there is little doubt that *something* very curious happened that night, which, for some reason, officialdom is hushing up. For it all to be rumour seems most improbable, as too many people claim to have seen things, and there is a considerable consistency. And if rumour, why not denounce it . . . and why obtain the civilian radar tapes? Not that rumours are well-known for turning up on radar screens!

A cover-story clearly emerged that the crashed object was a plane — perhaps thanks to the farmer's thinking that was what it must have been? But why cover up a plane-crash in woodland? And how do you get this plane out of there afterwards? And why again take away the radar tapes? The "plane crash" story *would* be an effective way of deflecting interest. And there is a story from one source that the plane which crashed had some kind of nasty weapon inside — hence the radiation? But *could* such a crash be hidden — presumably to prevent panic or public outcries against "necessary" military deployments? I have grave doubts about the ethics of all this, if that really is the answer. Maybe the UFO story was seeded to hide the crash. But it seems to be the other way round. For it was the plane-crash rumour that was spread to farmers and foresters. The UFO rumour came only to restricted sources. Realistically a UFO crash does seem a better explanation.

Brenda Butler is fair in her assessment, with which I concur: "We must have an open mind. It may have been a UFO . . . or a secret experiment of some sort." We are *not* giving up. Lord Clancarty is looking at the government angle for us. Lawyer Harry Harris is probing the legality of this apparent cover-up of *something*. Brenda and Dot are plugging away . . . "We intend to find out what *really* happened. If we do, we'll let you know.

SOVIET "UFOs" IDENTIFIED AS SATELLITE LAUNCHINGS

Notes concerning the "Petrozavodsk Phenomenon" and the sighting of June 14, 1980

Pekka Teerikorpi

An astronomer at Turku University Observatory, Turku, Finland, Dr Teerikorpi will be remembered for his previous contribution to FSR, in association with Dr J. Kyröläinen, namely *CE-III Report from Rauma, Finland* (Vol. 27, No. 3).

ABSTRACT: It is pointed out that according to well-established facts both the so-called Petrozavodsk Phenomenon and the more recent sighting of June 14, 1980, reported from the Soviet Union, were caused by launchings of Soviet satellites from the northern Soviet space rocket station close to the town of Plesetsk. It is to be expected that such light phenomena will add "noise" to Soviet UFO reports, even in future, because the Soviet press does not publish detailed information on the launchings.

Introduction

In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to some reports from the Soviet Union, describing impressive night-time light phenomena in the sky, witnessed simultaneously by large numbers of people over large areas of the country, and in some cases also in the neighbouring country of Finland. Especially, I refer to two incidents which have been described in FSR: the Petrozavodsk Phenomenon of September 20, 1977,[1] and the sighting of June 14, 1980.[2] In fact, there is no reason to suppose that either of these sightings is due to anything more fantastic than the launching of Soviet satellites. The fact that some Soviet ufologists seem to have erroneously emphasised the importance of these reports must indicate the limited flow of information in the Soviet Union concerning the launches.

It may sound strange that Soviet UFO proponents, among them scientists, are so ignorant of the great activity of the northern Soviet space rocket centre about 300 kms south of Arkhangelsk. However, we should remember that the existence of this cosmodrome, from which more than half of the world's satellites have been launched in recent years (one or two per week), has not been publicly discussed in the Soviet Union, although its activities have been closely followed by western experts since its operation was started in 1966. Because of the close-by town of Plesetsk, this space centre is usually referred to in the West as Plesetsk.

Well, the reader may reply, how can we be sure that these two incidents really were due to launches from Plesetsk? In fact, casual reading of the published eyewitness accounts may not immediately bring such an explanation into mind, especially if one does not know how impressive the sight of an ascending rocket may be (also, such accounts necessarily contain inaccuracies and unintentional distorsions). I will first discuss in some detail the Petrozavodsk phenomenon. It should be noted that soon after the incident Hynek's *International UFO Reporter* offered the launch of a Soviet satellite as an explanation,[3] following the reasonable identification proposed by J. Oberg in ref. 4.

The Petrozavodsk phenomenon: the launch of Cosmos 955

I will list some arguments in favour of the rocket explanation:

1. The Petrozavodsk phenomenon was observed all over Finland, even in the western parts, simultaneously with observations in the Baltic and Karelia. This proves its high altitude, and is compatible with a rocket.
2. Its outlook as observed here, and direction of movement, were exactly as expected from a rocket launch from Plesetsk — in good weather these launches have been many times observed from Finland.
3. What is important is that the phenomenon exactly coincided in time with the launch of the Cosmos 955 satellite from Plesetsk, as shown by western analyses.[4] It should be noted that *Pravda* publishes short notices of Soviet satellite launches within one or two days of the launch. This was the case also with Cosmos 955. However, *Pravda* usually gives only the name of the satellite, the date of the launch and some technical details, but omits the exact time of the launch and the name and location of the cosmodrome (if it is Plesetsk). Because of this latter fact, it is understandable that Soviet people may be confused as to the real nature of the related light phenomena.
4. One can safely conclude that the Petrozavodsk phenomenon was due to the exhaust flames and gases from the rocket which took Cosmos 955 into orbit. However, one may ask, what about the curious details

of the reports, e.g. claims concerning low-flying glows, "rays" extending down to the ground etc. In fact, Cruikshank and Swift,[5] in their analysis of the incident, emphasised such details.

As regards the "low-flying glows," such reports probably are due to the well-known fact that it is difficult to estimate distances of unfamiliar phenomena, for example, close to Turku, a Finnish town in the south-western part of the country, two men came to believe that the Petrozavodsk phenomenon had a diameter of 10 metres and was situated only 300 metres from these witnesses (actually the distance was many hundreds of kilometres!). They thought it was approaching them, got frightened, and drove away.[6] Similarly, when an Estonian journalist, Jyri Lina, describes the Petrozavodsk phenomenon in his book "On the UFO Research in the Soviet Union" (published in Finnish only),[7] the colourful collection of statements from the witnesses is characterised by many analogous and necessarily quite unreliable estimates.

As regards the "rays" or "golden streams of light" (typical formations of exhaust gases), these were observed (and photographed) also by Finnish witnesses, hundreds of kilometres from Petrozavodsk. These were described using phrases similar to those used by witnesses in Petrozavodsk. Hence, the (incorrect) impression of rays extending *locally* down to the ground in Petrozavodsk is not so surprising.

When discussing such peculiar details, Cruikshank and Swift[5] suggest that "we have a kind of paradox where the last few details of the sighting transformed it from an apparently identifiable event into one that appears to remain unidentified." I cannot see here any serious paradox. The quite questionable significance of these details which probably are due to poor observing (low-flying glows, rays extending down to the ground) or are totally unrelated to the light phenomenon (holes in the window glass) cannot be reasonably compared with the well-established evidence that the primary phenomenon was a rocket launch.

Another kind of confusion arises if the statements in newspapers as regards the places of observation are interpreted as conveying the track of flight of the phenomenon. For example, in FSR 25, No. 1, p. 25, TASS was quoted as saying that "At 3.00 a.m. a UFO, in the shape of a fiery ball, appeared at a great height in the sky over Helsinki. After hanging for a few minutes over the centre of the City, it then flew off at high speed towards the East." Now, I can assure the reader that this phenomenon was not observed *over* the centre of Helsinki, but it was positioned rather low over the eastern horizon, just like the exhaust flames from a Plesetsk rocket should be. The time of observation given, 3.00 a.m., refers to the Finnish official time, one hour behind the Soviet (Moscow) time. Thus, when the report continues that "at 4.00 a.m. there was a UFO over Petrozavodsk," it refers to exactly the same time of observation and the same event.

The sighting of June 14, 1980: the launch of Cosmos 1188

When I read the description of the phenomenon which was observed from Moscow and surrounding cities,[2] it immediately struck me that this might be another launch from Plesetsk. The statement by S. Bozhich was especially revealing: "Indeed, this one was extraordinarily similar to the one that flew over Petrozavodsk." It remained to be checked whether this observation coincided with any of the known launches. And in fact, from the monthly catalogue of satellite launches published by the British journal *Spaceflight*,[8] it was found that *exactly* at the time of sighting (11h 50min p.m. Soviet official time) the satellite Cosmos 1188 was launched from Plesetsk, and a short announcement was again to be read in *Pravda* (June 17, 1980). The description of the phenomenon, as given by FSR, very well fits with a rocket launch, and the drawings based on photos are quite similar to the appearance of an ascending rocket (as e.g. observed and photographed a few times in Finland). Cosmos 1188 went into an orbit with the inclination angle of 63 degrees, which means that it was launched quite closely in the eastern direction. This general movement to the East can be discerned in the description given by FSR, though the apparent track of the object on the map given in page 14 of ref. 2 cannot be its true track relative to the ground (which was much more north of Moscow; here I refer to what I said concerning the Petrozavodsk phenomenon "over" Helsinki).

Two additional reports from Dr Zigel's files are presented as indicating that small craft were released from the "Glavnyy Ob'eckt" and landed on the streets of Moscow. However, there does not seem to be any evidence which links these reports with the primary light phenomenon. As in the case of the Petrozavodsk phenomenon, these details do not in the least affect the conclusion that the phenomenon of June 14, 1980, was most probably due to the launch of Cosmos 1188.

Concluding remarks

It is to be hoped that the present discussion enhances healthy criticism as regards the nature of UFO reports received from the Soviet Union. Because of the limited information concerning the launches of satellites, ordinary people and even newspapermen and scientists in the Soviet Union are prone to be confused as to the origin of the related light phenomena. This noise factor should be kept in mind when considering Soviet UFO reports, especially those which have been simultaneously observed over large areas. It should be noted that the most interesting

UFO observations concern quite local incidents, with a small number of witnesses, as emphasised e.g. by J. A. Hynek.[9] In general, one should be cautious of night-time light phenomena simultaneously observed over large areas, because these usually are due to either astronomical phenomena or our own space-technology.

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank Dr H. Oja from the Observatory and Astrophysics Laboratory of University of Helsinki, who kindly helped me to locate information concerning Cosmos 1188.

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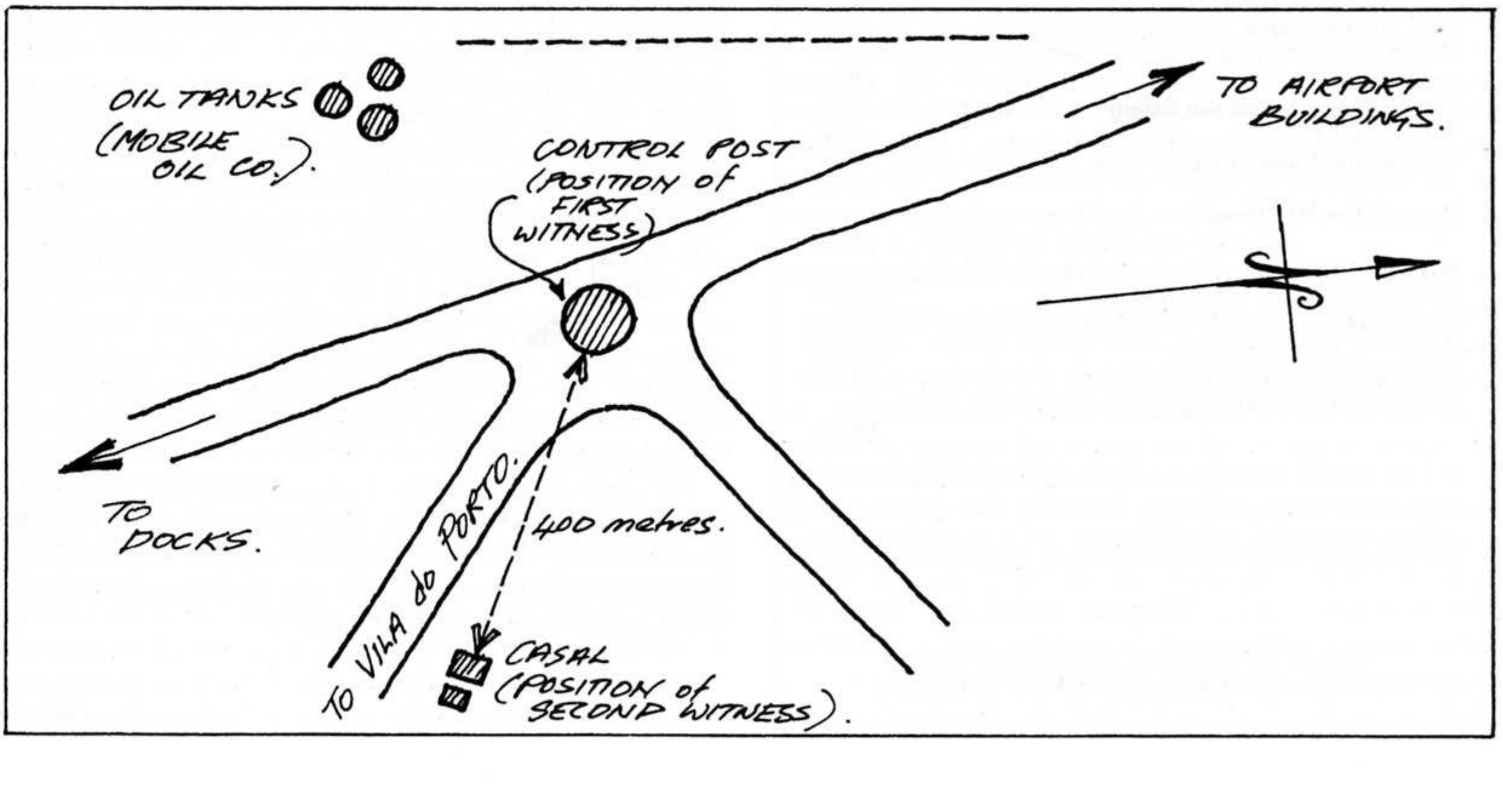
MORE ON THE AZORES LANDING OF SEPTEMBER 1954

Gordon Creighton

IN my letter to the Editor in FSR Volume 27, No. 4 (page 23), I gave some details of the Azores Incident to which our lady correspondent had referred in her report of the gigantic "cigar" that she saw from an aircraft while crossing the Atlantic. As readers will recall, she said that the incident took place on September 20, 1954, at Santa Maria Airport in the Azores, and that it was the case listed as No. 14 in Dr. Jacques Vallée's study, "The Pattern Behind the UFO Landings," which forms part of *The Humanoids,* edited by Charles Bowen and first issued in 1966.

Our friend and reader Sr. Joaquim Fernandes of Oporto (Northern Portugal), who is himself a professional journalist on the important newspaper *Jornal de Noticias,* and also the Director of the review *Insólito* and a member of the "OURANOS" UGEPI UFO INVESTIGATION GROUP, has now written to me a very interesting letter enclosing the full text of the original press report of November 21, 1954, as it appeared in the Azores newspaper *Ocorrencia.* Readers will undoubtedly be interested to see this, so I give below my translation of the complete Portuguese text. Our thanks for this go not only to Senhor Joaquim Fernandes, but also to Senhor Teixeira Pombo and his colleagues of the Azores Branch of CEAFI *(Centre for the Study of Astronomy and of Unwonted Phenomena),* of Apartado 3, Aeroporto de Santa Maria, Azores, who were good enough to send the text to Sr. Joaquim Fer-



nandes. Incidentally Sr. Pombo mentions in his letter that there used to be on file a sketch of the UFO, made presumably by the witness, but that "not for the first time, we find that, in some mysterious fashion, the sketch has now 'disappeared'!"

The report (in *Ocorrencia*, Santa Maria de Açores, November 21, 1954)

Reporter: Airport Guard No. 14, Vitorino Lourenço Monteiro.
Subject: Sighting of an unknown aircraft.

I beg to inform you that, at 2240 hours today, when I was on duty in the Central Control Post of this Airport, the lights being turned off, I observed a fairly bright yellow light travelling silently and at a moderate speed through the air from North to South over this Island. Then, at a certain point, it started to descend vertically right by where I was, and came to rest on the ground.

I perceived at once that it was an elliptically shaped machine of unknown origin. It was about three metres long and about 1½ metres high. It was of a bluish colour, and on the top of it it had what looked like two transmitter aerials. No landing gear was to be seen. On the central, upper part there was an opening devoid of any cover, through which its single occupant suddenly emerged.

I switched on the light inside the Control Post, and was able to see that this individual was wearing a uniform, with a dark-coloured helmet, a dark yellow overall, and trousers of the same colour, secured with a dark belt, and long yellow boots with zippers at the side. He was of normal height and looked about 35 years old, with fair hair, slight beard, and no moustache.

Emerging from the machine he quickly stepped forward to contact me, greeting me correctly with a handshake and a couple of slaps on the back, and uttering words that I was unable to understand, being in a language different from ours, and not resembling either English or French. The strange occurrence left me glued to the spot and puzzled — indeed all the more so, as the craft had meanwhile taken off again and was heading away to the south, without having refuelled. In a flash it was gone and out of sight, so it had been impossible for me to take any sort of action.

The sound made by the craft was like the sound made by wind against telephone wires.

A few moments later, up came José Batista, aged 45, married, a native of this Island, and residing at Atabúa, Ribeira Grande, Vila do Porto, here at Santa Maria. He asked me what that light was that had just taken off in a southerly direction. He said he had seen it from a distance that he estimated to be about 400 metres.

Additional note from Sr. Teixeira Pombo of CEAFI, Santa Maria, about the second witness

On May 2, 1977, the Second eyewitness, José Batista, was contacted (reference the landing case of November 21, 1954, observed by the Airport Guard Vitorino Lourenço Monteiro).

This man is now about 70 years old, and in poor health. He no longer remembers the incident very well, but in fact he was quite some distance from the spot at the moment when the landing occurred. He confirmed that it took place at about 2300 hours. He said he saw a very bright light over in the direction of the Police Control Post at the Airport. He himself was at that moment at the spot known as Casal, about 400 metres distant from the Control Post. He had the impression that the light subsequently moved off towards the Mobil Oil Company's oil depots, over towards the sea.

He went to the Police Control Post and asked the guard what the light was, and was told that it might possibly have been a flying saucer, and that its pilot had tried to talk to the guard and had then re-entered his machine and vanished rapidly.

Continued on page 20

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THE UFO PHENOMENON: LAUGH, LAUGH, STUDY, STUDY

J. Allen Hynek

Dr Hynek's article was first published in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Journal *Technology Review*, Volume 83, Number 7, July 1981.

I first became involved with UFO reports in 1948 — I was then an astronomer at Ohio State University — when the Air Force's Air Technical Intelligence Center asked me to help determine how many of the current sightings had possible astronomical origins as meteors, planets, and twinkling stars.

J. Allen Hynek is professor emeritus and former chairperson of the Department of Astronomy at Northwestern University. He was associate director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Laboratory in Cambridge, Mass. from 1956 to 1960, when he was in charge of the U.S. Optical Satellite Tracking Programme. Dr Hynek was scientific consultant to Project Blue Book (the Air Force UFO study) from 1952 to 1969, and in 1973 he founded the Center for UFO Studies in Evanston, Illinois. He has also been a consultant to *Flying Saucer Review* for eleven years.
EDITOR

A Persistent Craze

I was squarely in the ranks of those who were sure that the reporting of flying saucers (as they were then called) was simply a postwar craze that, like all fads, would quickly run its course. Yet UFO reports have proven to be at least a long-lived "craze"; three decades later it persists, in many levels of society, and in many areas of the world.

The comprehensive catalogue of UFO reports maintained at the Center for UFO Studies contains entries from some 140 countries. Not only is the global ubiquity of the UFO phenomenon undeniable, but the same sorts of sightings are reported from diverse cultures, climates, and levels of sophistication. There appears to be a high awareness of the concept — a Gallup poll has amply verified this in the United States — and every major language has an appropriate term for UFOs. Moreover, critics who hold that interest in UFOs is largely generated by the media may be surprised to learn that sightings have been reported in countries in which discussion of UFOs, especially by the media, is sternly discouraged; the Soviet Union and China are cases in point.

The most useful reports come from people who are sophisticated, responsible, and mentally stable (as judged by commonly accepted standards), if only because they have so much to lose by "going public." Their "experiences" are almost certain to be greeted with disbelief, even ridicule, by their colleagues. Consider these examples:

- Some years ago an M.I.T. professor called me from across the country. "Drop everything and come to Cambridge," he said, to investigate a sighting by one of his colleagues, the associate director of the Instrumentation Laboratory. I did so and listened with interest to his technical description of the trajectory and appearance (even as to its colour-temperature) of a light coursing through the sky. Its origin remains unidentified.
- I recently interviewed a high-ranking officer of the Argentine Air Force, in the presence of other officers, who had sighted a UFO some months before. He was driving through open country late one afternoon with a colleague, in threatening weather, when a cone-shaped object suddenly appeared out of low-hanging clouds and proceeded to move at a moderate speed just beneath the cloud cover. He immediately stopped the car and had only enough time to step out and snap one photograph before the object rose back into the clouds. I examined the original negative under magnification; it appeared to be a bona fide image, with no evidence of darkroom trickery.
- A four-person crew from the Army Medical Rescue Mission was flying a helicopter to Cleveland from Columbus, Ohio when they encountered a wingless craft that swooped towards them, hovered momentarily, and seriously affected the behaviour of the helicopter: a strange force reportedly raised it while the pilot was attempting an emergency descent.
- A commercial pilot — a commandante for many years with Alitalia — was flying at 12,000 feet on a sunny day when he and his crew observed a strange "metallic" craft flying alongside. It paralleled the airplane for a few moments, then suddenly rose vertically and disappeared into the sky. Upon reporting a "strange balloon" (he was not going to report a UFO),

the pilot was told that the crew of a British airliner at 40,000 feet, an instant before, had also reported an "unknown" object swishing by on a vertical trajectory into the sky. But the pilot did not report the incident to his company, knowing full well that airlines do not look favourably upon pilots who "see things."

As technically trained as some of the UFO witnesses may be, we must face the fact that most individual UFO reports are anecdotal. Lack of support for professional investigation has undoubtedly let many opportunities to obtain scientific data slip through the cracks. Nonetheless, some investigators, largely in their spare time, have succeeded in relating UFO reports to physical parameters. C. Poher was able to show a statistical correlation between UFO events in France and the vertical component of the geomagnetic field as recorded at the Chambon-la-Foret Geophysical Station. More recently, J. Accetta (under a grant from the Center for UFO Studies) conducted a search for perturbations in routinely recorded geophysical data (housed at the World Data Center and maintained by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) that might corroborate UFO sightings. Of some 65 categories of geophysical data, including solar, interplanetary, ionospheric, and geomagnetic phenomena, he found six categories that seemed to merit further attention. D. Pearson has described in some detail a system for retrospective measurement of ground traces allegedly associated with UFO sightings that includes several thermal-analysis methods for determining to what extent the soil at the UFO site had been heated. But lack of funds has hampered such investigations, although very promising (unpublished) explorations have occurred.

UFO researchers are caught in a classic "Catch-22" situation: when they seek funds and projects to collect quantitative evidence, critics point to the absence of supporting data. For example, NASA, in rejecting President Carter's request that it undertake an examination of the UFO question, stated in effect that it would do so only if presented with "hard" data. Some data-collecting systems exist for other purposes, but the lack of legitimacy makes it virtually impossible for UFO researchers to exploit them. For example, the North American Air Defense Command could introduce a subroutine in its computer program to monitor the many UCTS (uncorrelated targets) it daily observes on radar, but when I suggested this to the Air Force I was told that their mission is to check only ballistic trajectories.

Beyond the Fringe

UFOs are difficult to take seriously, and much of the derision from the scientific community is well deserved. Three aspects in particular have led to their general dismissal: the preponderance of *identified* flying objects (IFOs); the space-age-spawned belief in the concept of "we are not alone" (and its corollary, "We've gone to the moon so why can't they come here?"); and the few but highly visible "true believers" who have adopted the idea of celestial visitors with quasi-religious fervour.

It is true that the great majority of initial UFO reports are simply the result of misidentifications of ordinary events. A. Hendry's analysis of the reports received at the Center for UFO Studies over two years showed that nearly 90 per cent were identifiable. Clearly, if that many people can be mistaken, why not assume that *all* UFO reports are either misidentifications or hoaxes? But such dismissal does not resonate with the scientific outlook. After all, only one unexplained track in a helium bubble chamber out of thousands indicates a new subatomic particle.

Stars have twinkled, planets have risen and set, and meteors have flashed across the skies for untold centuries; why are they now suddenly being reported as UFOs? Perhaps the answer lies in the tenor of the times, which is really up to sociologists and psychologists to explain. In this age of unyielding tension from the spectre of nuclear holocaust, dwindling natural resources, overpopulation, pollution, inflation, the energy crisis, and the breakdown of social traditions, wouldn't it be nice if we could put all our troubles on someone else's shoulders? But whose? Why, the extraterrestrials, of course! Throughout history people have looked to the skies for succour, but the space age has replaced the gods and spirits of old with the enticing possibility that intelligence far more advanced than our own is visiting the earth. After all, if they can get here, they must have very advanced technology, and we could be the beneficiaries of their fabulous knowledge.

From this conviction it may be just a short step to misidentifying what one sees in the sky — or to seeing UFOs simply because one wants to see them. And there are always those small but colourful "space people" cults that blindly accept their leaders' accounts of trips to Venus on UFOs and the lofty messages relayed to humanity from those who make their home there.

These emotional, even neurotic aspects of the UFO scene could easily lead to the conclusion that the UFO phenomenon is utter rubbish. But this impugns the integrity, and perhaps the competence, of our scientists, pilots, engineers, and others judged sane and responsible who have related sober albeit incredible accounts of UFO encounters. These certainly cannot be put into the same category as alleged visits to Venus and Mars.

Call in the Professionals

After many years of experience with virtually all aspects of the UFO phenomenon, I have come to believe that if we "precipitate out" the essential elements

from the chaos of "popular ufology", we will uncover a new empirical phenomenon, perhaps comparable to the first glimpses of micro-organisms by Leeuwenhoek or Jupiter's satellites by Galileo. Unfortunately, the process may be almost as taxing as Madame Curie's extraction of a gram of radium from several tons of pitchblende.

This hasn't already been done because in the face of overwhelming ridicule, it has been impossible to obtain qualified personnel and the necessary funds to treat the subject seriously and professionally. In the wake of buffoonery and religious fantasy, the field has been left to the well-meaning but untrained amateur who all too often has fallen into the same trap as the scientist — of equating the UFO phenomenon irrevocably with "SETI" (the search for extraterrestrial intelligence), leaving no room for open-ended research. However, these same amateurs have done yeoman service in gathering and preserving data that otherwise would have been irretrievably lost, and they did this while earning their livelihood elsewhere. What chance would medical research or going to the moon have if left entirely to unpaid volunteers?

Well-known previous efforts — Project Blue Book, the Robertson Panel, and the Condon Committee — constituted "professional treatment" only in a very limited sense. As a consultant to Blue Book (the Air Force's UFO project from 1952 to 1969), an associate member of the Robertson Panel, and one who kept in close touch with the activities of the Condon Committee, I can speak with some competence.

Project Blue Book took its signals from the Pentagon and these, largely dictated by civilian and military scientific advisors, were that rational explanations for all UFO reports should be found. But these explanations were rarely based on extended investigations because of a circular reasoning: since the great majority of UFO reports can be explained rationally, then if one tries harder almost *all* reports could be so explained; therefore, why bother? Little effort was made to obtain quantitative data — charts, graphs, angular velocities, subtended angles, spectral characteristics, and so on — since UFOs had to be nonsense.

The Robertson Panel, composed of high-ranking (and very busy) scientists, spent parts of five days early in 1953 surveying the situation. It made no investigations of its own, relying solely on fragmentary examinations of cases selected by Blue Book personnel. The panel had been convened by the CIA, whose concern seemed not to be UFOs *per se* but the possible use of UFO reports by subversive elements to clog military communications or affect the psychological stability of the public. Instead of suggesting further scientific investigation, the panel recommended that every effort be made to "play down" UFO reports.

There have been many criticisms of the Condon Committee, although its report received the imprimatur of the National Academy of Sciences and has been accepted by some as the definitive work on UFOs. A quotation from just one critic — perhaps the mildest — will suffice. The subcommittee on UFOs of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) stated: "To understand the Condon report, which is difficult to read, due in part to its organization, one must study the bulk of the report. It is not enough to read summaries, such as those by Sullivan and Condon, or summaries of summaries, on which the vast majority of readers and news media seem to rely. There are differences in the opinions and conclusions drawn by the authors of the various chapters, and there are differences between these and Condon's summary." The AIAA group further remarked: "[We were] greatly perturbed by the paucity of thorough scientific and technological analysis applied to practically all observations before the Condon study."

Of course, one could pursue the theory that Project Blue Book and the Condon Committee were part of a super whitewash — that the highest echelons of government, not only of this nation but of many nations, know what is happening but are intentionally covering it up. And I continue to receive clandestine reports from military personnel that they have been involved, intimately or peripherally, in such a cover-up but who plead fear of reprisal when I request a signed statement. Yet even though use of the Freedom of Information Act recently revealed that the CIA and FBI had exhibited interest in UFOs — they stoutly denied it earlier — this hardly constitutes evidence of a sinister, Machiavellian plot. If such a global cover-up indeed exists, it would constitute the best-kept secret of all time.

Putting Reports in Order

If, in due course, grants for professional study of the UFO phenomenon do become available, how might we proceed? The late astronomer Henry Norris Russell set a fine example in *The Origin of the Solar System*. He didn't quite solve the problem, but he did set down the known properties of the solar system (coplanar orbits, the revolution, rotation, masses and densities of planets and satellites) for which any viable theory must account. We can hardly do better than to follow his example with respect to the UFO phenomenon.

As a first step, we can order reports into six observational categories. These in no way presuppose the origin of the phenomenon; they simply specify the type of UFO experience. The first three categories are observations at a distance, while the last three are "close encounters," close enough for detailed features to be observable (a distance of 200 yards or less is a rule of thumb):

Nocturnal Lights. The witness observes a luminous point or extended source; in the latter case, the luminosity generally obscures any presumed material form

of the source. It might be described as a concentrated source of electromagnetic energy, strong but not necessarily peaking in the visible spectrum.

Daylight Discs. The operative word here is "daylight"; however, since the great majority of sightings made in the daytime refer to discoidal or oval (sometimes cylindrical) metallic-looking objects, I refer to them generally as discs. Whether a nocturnal light would appear as a metallic disc by day is not known. In this purely observational classification system, the classes may or may not overlap. Indeed, we must not assume that all UFOs have the same origin; we may have "apples and oranges."

Radar and Radar-Visual. Radar is the primary source of information, but particularly important are cases in which the UFO has also been sighted visually and the two observations substantially agree.

Close Encounters of the First Kind. There is no reported interaction between the UFO and the environment — these reports are the most common.

Close Encounters of the Second Kind. There is interaction with either or both animate and inanimate matter. The literature is replete with cases in which car engines have been killed at the approach of a UFO, holes and burnt rings on the ground have been found at the exact site of the alleged landing, and physiological effects on people and animals, as well as disturbances or destruction of vegetation, have been reported. These encounters obviously have the most immediate scientific value since they are capable of being studied in the laboratory.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind. These are distinguished by reports of creatures or entities closely associated with the UFO, regardless of whether they interact with human observers. Though the least frequently reported, this category has received by far the greatest prominence in the media because of its obvious appeal to the imagination and the "we are not alone" concept.

Numerous examples of all six categories are available in the literature.

Paradoxical Dualism

In our search for the properties of the UFO phenomenon, do we find anything that sets it apart from the everyday world? Is there something that makes it both shocking and paradoxical in the Niels Bohr sense, and hence that might suggest where to look for a breakthrough? The answer appears to be yes.

The UFO phenomenon, whatever its origin, is largely localized in both space and time. For example, unlike commercial aircraft, which can be tracked and viewed sequentially as they pass over town after town, a UFO is rarely observed in more than one locality, and virtually never is it seen sequentially. Like the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland,* it appears almost out of nowhere, makes its presence known, and then disappears. Also like the cat, it is sometimes reported to "materialize" and "dematerialize" and to change form. Alice's cat left its grin when it departed; the UFO, except in "close encounters of the second kind," leaves only a haunting memory. And like the cat, a UFO's appearance is short-lived — several studies have shown that the duration of a sighting averages 8 to 14 minutes.

Alice's cat had only one witness. Records show that about two-thirds of the cases involve two or more witnesses, but they very rarely have a host of witnesses. This has been the primary objection of some who might otherwise take UFO reports seriously: why so few witnesses? If we were dealing with a "nuts and bolts" craft launched from some cosmic Cape Canaveral, shouldn't it be visible to a great many earth dwellers?

The selective appearance of the UFO suggests deliberate staging, but on whose part? By whatever intelligence lies behind the UFO phenomenon or by an unconscious effort of the witness? For example, it is frequently stated that a UFO landed "on the road, directly ahead of our car." Why not far off to the side? Why directly in plain view, but then only to a handful of people?

Beyond these reported properties must be added even more bizarre "paranormal" characteristics. In addition to "materialization," "dematerialization," and change of form,implausible accelerations, speeds, and "instantaneous" changes in position without any apparent travel time have also been frequently reported. Although seemingly incredible, these paranormal aspects are too well documented to be disregarded.

We are apparently faced with a dualism similar to the wave-particle dualism of light that physicists had to confront a century ago. On the one hand, the UFO exhibits a physical nature: it can be seen and photographed, registers on radar, and can interact with the environment. On the other hand, it behaves as though it were obeying laws yet unknown to physics. We have a situation that is both shocking and paradoxical — one cannot discard one aspect in favour of the other just because it doesn't fit.

We may have to accept the possibility that the UFO phenomenon is beyond conventional, straightforward explanation, perhaps as the true source of the sun's light was beyond Kelvin and Helmholtz, who held stoutly to their "contraction theory" at the close of the nineteenth century — that as the sun shrank under the influence of gravity, potential energy was transformed into kinetic energy. The concept of the sun as a "nuclear energy device" was, of course, totally beyond them. Indeed, when told that fossils from the distant past proved that the sun must have been shining then as at present, Kelvin would have none of it. He

Continued on page 28

THE ENCOUNTER AT TURIS

A new humanoid report from Spain

Gordon Creighton

THE Spanish UFO journal *Stendek* has, as usual, some interesting material in its issue No. 45 (September 1981). The article in question, *Aproximación a la Casuística OVNI en el País Valenciano,* by **José A. Fernández, Roberto Jorge, and Luis Manuel,** is an account of some recent sightings in the region around Valencia, which lies on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, across the water from Mallorca (Majorca.) I have selected from it for translation this one case which involves alien entities seen at close quarters by a witness.

The episode occurred on July 25, 1979, at Turis, a small place lying some 35 kilometres to the south-west of Valencia, and was in due course reported in the local newspaper, *Las Provincias,* of August 8, 1979.

The three authors of the article made a joint investigation on the site and interviewed the witness at length, and their account is as follows:-

"Sr. Federico Ibáñez, a 54-year-old farmer, was driving in his *Renault-6* to visit some vineyards which he owns in the district known as Partidà de l'Albaïna in the local Valencian dialect. As he approached his property, he noticed something white and shining which was standing near a plantation of carob-bean trees owned by his friend and neighbour to whom the adjoining property belonged. He concluded at first that it must be his neighbour's car, a *600.*

"Owing to a bend in the road he lost sight of the shining object for a while, until it came into sight again and he found that it was now only some 50 metres or so ahead of him, and blocking the road. Thinking to stop and chat for a few minutes with his friend and neighbour, he drew up close behind the shining object, which he still took to be his neighbour's car.

"The time was 11.30a.m., and of course he had not given more than a cursory glance at the object — understandably enough, since he had been assuming that it was a motor car.

"But, just as he was on the point of switching off his engine and stepping out, he suddenly perceived to his amazement that this object was in fact no car at all, for it had no wheels, but was standing on two legs, and it was now only four metres from him!

"In shape the object resembled an egg standing on end, or rather, as the sketch shows, like half an egg. Its smooth white surface was shining intensely brightly under the bright morning sunlight. It was about 2½ metres high and 2½metres wide.

"Suddenly he noticed two small beings about 90cms in height running rapidly towards the shining object from a carob tree standing about ten metres to his left. The two beings disappeared from his view beside the object, and the object instantly took off, throwing up a cloud of dust from the dirt-road. As the object rose he was able to catch a view of its base, where there now seemed to be no sign of any legs.

"Sr. Ibáñez was by now out of his car, and stood watching the object as, like a shining 'pearl,' it vanished rapidly in the sky. The sighting had lasted no more than ten seconds or so.

"The two strange beings had been very fast over the ground, and this he found surprising in view of their strange garb, which was white and shining and reached right down to their knees and also covered the backs of their heads. At its widest part, the base, the garment seemed to him to be about 40 cms. wide. As the creatures ran, he could see their little black legs, terminating in little feet that "resembled boxing-gloves," as he put it. On their faces they wore what looked like strange black, protruding 'spectacles.'

"Astounded, the witness drove on to inspect his vines, but then came back to the spot and made a very careful inspection of the site before returning to his home. When his wife, his daughter, and his son-in-law had listened to his account of his extraordinary experience, they all at once set out for the spot to inspect it for themselves, together with the manager of the Turis branch of the Banco de Valencia.

"When they got to the spot where the UFO had stood, they were surprised to see that another man, owner of another adjoining vineyard, had already arrived, and had parked his car precisely where the UFO had stood. Out of fear of ridicule, they did not dare to ask this other man to move his car. They felt that they could not ask him to do this without telling him of the extraordinary experience. The result was of course that they had to confine their inspection to the area immediately around the other man's car. However they were able to establish that the UFO had produced a 'sweeping effect' upon the soil around about as it took off. Behind the carob-bean tree from which the two humanoids had run they found two strange fissures in the ground. Sr. Ibáñez, who is himself a keen amateur hunter, was unable to identify these marks as comparable in any way to marks such as are normally made by any game bird or animal known to him."

When the three authors, members of the Valencia

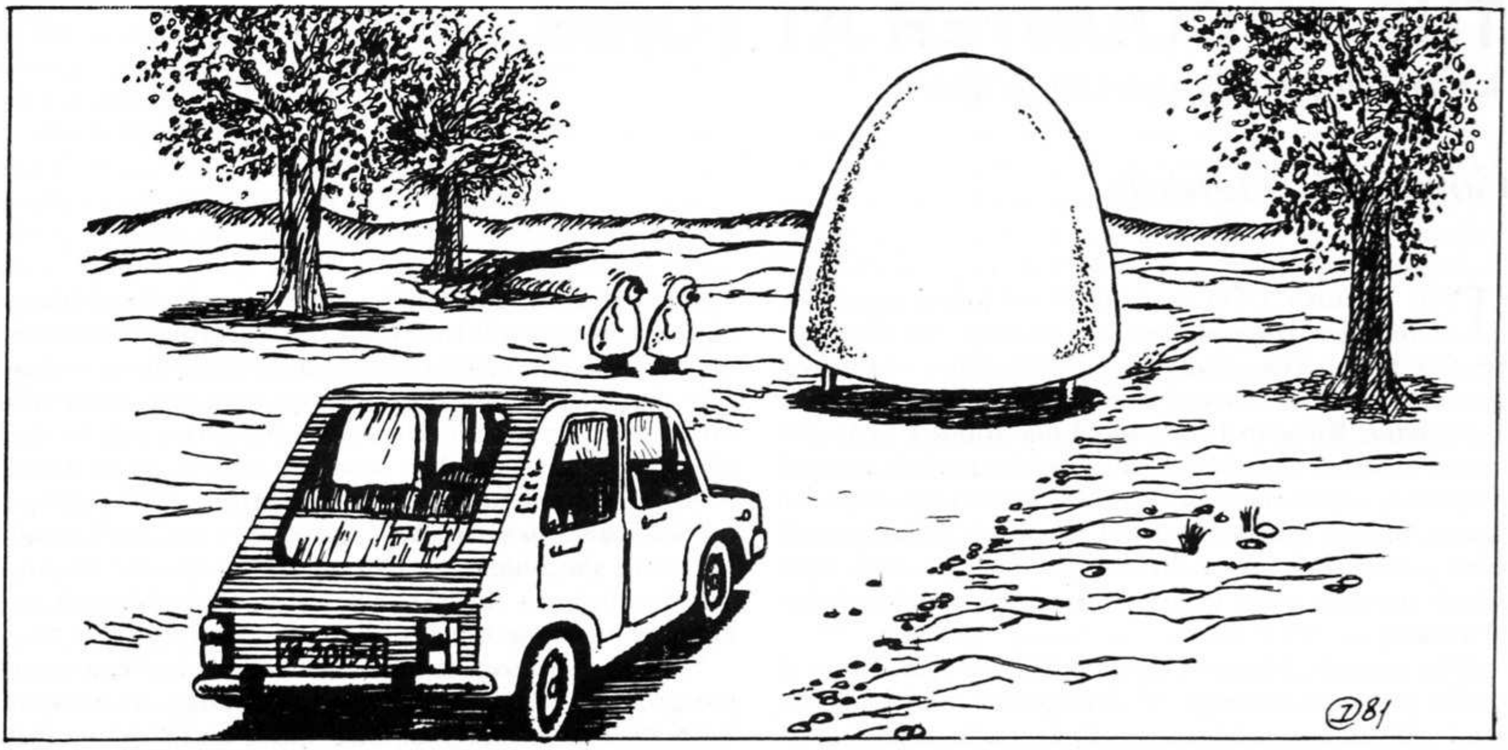

Figure 1: Reconstruction of the Turis incident by Spanish artist in *Stendek* No. 45 of September 1981.

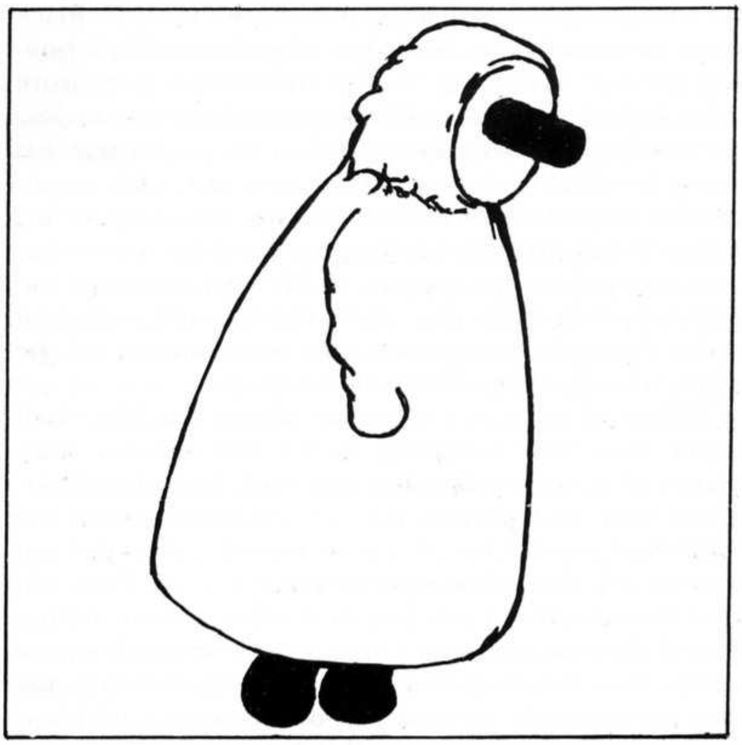

Figure 2: *Stendek* illustration of one of the entities.

UFO Investigation Group (AVIU), carried out their inspection of the spot three weeks later, they found something that Sr. Ibáñez and his family had not seen. This was a set of four circular marks on the road, forming a precise rectangle, 176 cms × 130 cms. Sr. Ibáñez and his family had not seen these marks of course because the neighbour's car had been standing right on top of them. But none of the many other people who had passed that way in the meantime seem to have seen the marks either, for, the dirt-road being a simple track and very dry, and much used by agricultural vehicles, the four circular marks had got covered over by loose earth. Another reason why nobody had found the four circular marks earlier was that the local press report had described the landing site as lying in the field of carob-bean trees, and consequently everyone had been examining the field and nobody had thought to look at the dirt-road.

Soil samples were collected, and moulds were taken of the four circular marks, and samples and moulds were passed to the biologist José Luis Caso, who is a member of *Stendek's* Committee of Consultants. Sr. Caso seems to have found nothing notable about the soil samples or the moulds, for they appeared to show no signs of radioactivity or of having been subjected to intense heat.

The sole eyewitness in this extraordinary case, Sr. Ibáñez, is held in high regard in Turis. He is a typical Spanish farmer, of no great education, his main preoccupation in life being his vineyards, where he labours most days from sunrise to sunset. He knew nothing about UFOs. Even the letters O.V.N.I. (the Spanish equivalent of U.F.O) meant nothing whatever to him.

Altogether, the three investigators interviewed Sr. Ibáñez three times, and shortly afterwards a further interrogation of the witness and an examination of the case was carried out by the two prominent Spanish Ufologists Vicente Juan Ballester Olmos and Miguel Guasp (also members of the Valencia UFO Investigation Group.) Their findings are in entire agreement with the present account.

A 1949 BRAZILIAN CONTACTEE — PART 2

Richard W. Heiden

Continuing the detailed version of the remarkable claims by a Brazilian student, which had been touched upon by Gordon Creighton in his item "Soaking wet 'space flight'" in FSR Vol. 22, No. 4.

READERS learned, in Part 1 of this article in the last issue of FSR (Volume 27, No. 5) that Senhor Mário Restier, aged 23, of Barra Mansa in the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, had claimed that on December 4, 1949, he was taken aboard a landed craft by two apparently friendly crew members. When he agreed to be taken for a "trip" he was immersed in a tub full of liquid which, he says he was told, would eliminate the discomfort of large accelerations, and so on . . .

After what seemed like six or eight hours, Mário felt homesick and wanted to return to Earth and, as if they could read his mind, his six guides told him, "We know that you are desirous of returning to your planet." They took him to a ship just like the one that had brought him, and each one said good-bye to him in a musical voice.

Mário was impressed by the fact that throughout the experience none of the guides gave any indication of pretense to show which one (if any) was the leader.

The process on the return trip was just the reverse of before — the crew asked him to go into the tub, he slept there, he woke up, his space-clothes dried, they dressed him in his original clothing, and they landed. Mário was let out near the place where he had been picked up, though not at the exact same spot.

When he got to his father's place ten minutes later, the latter scolded him for having disappeared for so long without telling anyone, worrying his family. It was only then that Mário Restier established that it was April 14, 1950. He was away from Earth four months, but, by his estimate, it was only three days at the most!

In one of the factories Mário had picked up a sample of opaque material measuring 10 cm × 20 cm × 2 mm thick. He brought it home, and found that it did not melt in flame, and he could not break it. This helped convince his father that he was not just making up a story about the four missing months, or had had an hallucination. Nevertheless, the elder Restier advised his son not to tell anyone about his experience, in view of its fantastic nature.

After his return, Mário was suddenly impelled to acquire and systematically study books on general physics, electronics, optics, and nuclear physics. His formal education had consisted of high school and a course for television technicians.

Mário Restier's experience was first published in the *Diário de Notícias* February 6, 1968, in an article by Carlos Neto.[3] The case was then investigated by Dr. Walter Buhler of the Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos sobre Discos Voadores (SBEDV).[4]

The witness's father had died in November of 1962, but an aunt of Mário's told Dr. Buhler that she remembered that many years ago, she had heard about the strange experience from a brother (Mário's uncle), in whom Mário's father had confided. Dr. Buhler also checked with a pharmacist who had been a close friend of the witness's father, but he did not remember hearing anything about the UFO experience.

Dr. Buhler was naturally surprised that Mário Restier should finally decide to "come out with the matter" after 18 years. Mário even made contact with a "Miss Sharp, of a foreign embassy," who gave him "facilities and recompense" so that, with his help, a propelled craft might be built, similar to the one whose operation was explained to him in the saucer and in the factories of the planet. Through Miss Sharp, Mário was offered a trip to her country, all expenses paid, so that there "the subject can be examined by experts . . . "

Mário hesitantly confided in Dr. Buhler that he had, in fact, had a second UFO contact, in September of 1956, about four years after he went to work in the iron and steel industry. This one occurred at about 8.00 p.m. on the way to another place his father had, in Bocainha, near Barra Mansa. When he saw the craft in the air, he had the feeling that someone wanted to talk with him. After he had walked some 100 metres more, it came down and landed 2 metres from the road. The man who got out was dressed just like the men on the planet he had visited, and his height was the same, though Mário did not recognise his features. He greeted Mário something like this: "Mário, you are again in union with us with respect to your project to build an engine . . . You can go ahead with it . . . We will be watching . . . It will never be used for the bad of the people of Earth . . ."

Mário asked him about the time difference, as the first contact had seemed like only three days. He replied that this fact was explained by the "Space-Time Contraction" and by the "Synchronism of Time."

This contact did not last more than ten minutes, and Mário did not enter the craft. He explained to Dr. Buhler that he did not tell this to the press or to other people because it would seem like "he wanted to pull

a lot of embers to his sardine" (Portuguese expression equivalent to "blow his own horn").

Mário told Dr. Buhler that the principle of propulsion had to do with two atomic reactors rotating at great speed around a very resistant axis. Two "condensers" would catch certain particles that were carried away by two "deflective coils," with the establishment of two "fields" — one vertical and one horizontal — which, in turn, would produce a large magnetic field, enough to neutralise the Earth's. A powerful solar battery would eventually be needed to start the engine when it is in space. The aliens found it interesting that Terrestrials had found their own means to partly substitute for the different material and methods used on their planet. To construct the "vehicle," they recommended to Mário that he reduce the design to a smaller model than the one he had travelled in, and whose operation was demonstrated to him on the screens.

Mário found that he could have finished the construction in two years if everything went well. Four steps would be necessary:

1. Studying up on the subject in books, which "he thought would take two months."
2. Raising the job site, the necessary conditions and tools existing in the country that could be "adapted to help in the construction."
3. Making up a list of necessary materials and machinery, including an electronic computer and a programmer. A preliminary budget for the construction would also be made.
4. Construction of the "engine."[5]

It might be noted that until 1959 (ten years after his first experience), Mário suffered from acrophobia (fear of heights) whenever he looked out the window of a building.

Dr. Buhler's own assessment of the case was as follows: "Sr. Mário impressed us favourably as a stable and sincere man, but we cannot judge the technical aspects involved, and we have still not seen or examined the interplanetary artifact that he says he had brought back from his trip."

Notes and References

3. This article was probably the source of the account in *Saucer News* (editor Gray Barker, Clarksburg, West Virginia) 15:2 (whole no. 72, summer 1968), pp. 17-18. But *Saucer News* did not give any references. Mário Restier's contact claim was also the subject of an article in the Rio de Janeiro *O Dia* of April 22, 1976, which was translated and/or cited in *Flying Saucer Review* 22:4 (published November 1976), p. 23, and *Official UFO* (editor Russ A. Rueger, New York) 1:12 (November 1976), pp. 21-22.
4 *SBEDV Boletim* nos. 60-61 (January-April 1968), pp. 12-18 and 24-25. *Boletim Especial 1975*, pp. 38-39. The present account is drawn from the SBEDV's report.
5 Mário Restier's compulsion is similar to the one that overcame a Wisconsin man who was driving with his daughter when they saw an aerial UFO with occupants visible through the windows. This sighting took place June 15, 1973, near West Bend, Wisconsin, 45 km northwest of Milwaukee's city hall. Afterwards he immersed himself in the study of physics and spent all his spare time in his basement laboratory working on flying saucer propulsion.

AZORES LANDING OF 1954

(Continued from page 12)

He said he could not recall the colour of the light, except that it was very bright. He had not seen the actual craft itself. All he knew about it was what he had heard from the guard. He had heard no noise from the craft. Apart from this, he says he remembers nothing else, but he thinks he would not have been able to say anything more than this, since all that had caught his attention at the time was the extremely vivid light.

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FSR BOOKSHELF — 14

New UFO books reviewed by . . . *Janet & Colin Bord*

IN the mid-1970s the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal was formed, with the intention of attempting "to encourage the critical investigation of [the many kinds of paranormal and fringe-science claims] from a responsible, scientific point of view." In the ensuing years it has seemed to many non-members that the attitude shown by the Committee's spokesmen, in material published in their journal **Skeptical Inquirer** and elsewhere, is somewhat less than open-minded. Newcomers to the Committee's activities can judge for themselves by reading *Paranormal Borderlands of Science*, edited by Kendrick Frazier (large 474-page paperback published by Prometheus Books, 700 East Amherst Street, Buffalo, N.Y. 14215, U.S.A., price unknown), which is a collection of 47 articles from the *Skeptical Inquirer*.

The subject range is wide, and includes psi phenomena, Uri Geller, psychic photography, metal bending, Amityville horror, biorhythms, astrology, Bermuda Triangle, cattle mutilations, dowsing, Von Däniken, psychic archaeology, Velikovsky, Tunguska, and UFOs.

Among the articles there is some silliness (notably "Do Fairies Exist?" by Robert Sheaffer) and some valuable material (including the fascinating insight into "cold reading" — how psychics convince sitters that they know all about them).

The UFO material is not particularly earth-shattering. Philip J. Klass writes on "NASA, the White House, and UFOs" and on "UFOs, the CIA, and the New York Times;" James Oberg examines and explains the UFO sightings allegedly made by astronauts, and the 1979 Persian Gulf "UFO" (satellite rocket booster falling to earth), David I. Simpson describes the 1970 Warminster UFO hoax, and Anthony Standen discusses "The Semantics of UFOs." However there is also a valuable 9-page review by Ernest H. Taves of *The Andreasson Affair* in which he points out the flaws in the investigation into Betty Andreasson's "abduction" and explains it in non-UFO terms.

Despite its uneven quality, this collection of articles is well worth reading. Although the sceptics are not always right, they can often blow a breath of fresh air on to subjects too long the province only of "believers." To make up our minds on any subject we must consider *all* points of view.

In FSR Vol. 26, No. 3 we reviewed the book *UFO . . . Contact from the Pleiades* which describes the contact claims of the Swiss Eduard Meier. Since then no evidence has been forthcoming to support his claims and Meier has apparently made further claims and Meier has apparently made further claims which remove him from the realm of hoaxers and give him the aura of prankster and conman. In America **Kal K. Korff** was so incensed by Meier's effrontery, and the gullibility or chicanery of his American supporters and publishers, that he has attempted to gather the evidence together and expose their fraud. Much of this evidence, unfavourable to Meier, has been published before in various journals, but what is new is Korff's conversations with some of Meier's American supporters who originally accepted his wild stories and cleverly faked pictures and are now seen wriggling about trying to unhook themselves. Regretfully Korff's book is not well organised and will make muddled reading for anyone who is not already familiar with the story.

Ground Saucer Watch, the American group who say that their computer analysis of UFO photographs can show if they are genuine or not, have 40 of their computer photographs reproduced in the book. Unfortunately for the reader, the reproductions are too small (2½″ × 3½″) and of such poor quality that little can be learned from studying them, and as is usual with GSW analyses, their explanations of the methods used and how they arrived at their conclusions are inadequate and muddled and so their conclusions have to be taken on trust by the reader. Neither author Korff nor principal Meier advocate Wendelle Stevens appears to know what sort of camera Meier claimed to have used, for on page 38 Stevens is reported as saying that the mirror on the camera was jammed closed and Meier was therefore unable to view through it. Korff enlarges upon this statement by remarking that Meier used an Olympus single lens reflex, but all the evidence in the captions of the original *Pleiades* book shows that Meier's camera was one of the compact range-finder cameras made by Olympus, having no removable lens and therefore needing no reflex mirror. This sort of muddle over easily established technical detail is all too typical of so much UFO research and provides assistance to the hoaxers by muddying the trail. The book, a large size (8″ × 11″) staple-bound 124-page paperback, is a self-publishing exercise which would have benefited from some professional editorial help. The writing is often clumsy, and typographical errors abound.

In short, **The Meier Incident — The Most Infamous Hoax in Ufology!** is a blunt instrument wielded without much skill, when what ufology really needs is a scalpel used with precision. Nevertheless all UFO

cognoscenti who have so far collected Meier material will undoubtedly want to add this volume to their files. (Published by William L. Moore, P.O. Box 1845, Prescott, AZ 86302; also available from Arcturus Book Service, 263 N. Ballston Avenue, Scotia, N.Y. 12302, U.S.A., price $6.50.)

Having 'examined the evidence' for UFOs, **Robert Sheaffer** has come to a decisive conclusion: 'UFOs, as a phenomenon distinct from all others, simply do not exist.' (p.211) Sheaffer is an arch-sceptic in the UFO field and as a result many UFO proponents will not wish to read this book. But they would be wrong to reject it without giving it a fair hearing. "Sceptical" does not necessarily mean "stupid," and an open-minded study of the book will show that Sheaffer has many valid points to make, although he does inevitably go too far in his dismissal of all the evidence for UFOs. **The UFO Verdict: Examining the Evidence** (Prometheus Books, N.Y., hardcover, 242 pages, illustrated with photographs, notes and index, $15.95, available from Arcturus Book Service, address as above) covers a wide range of topics including physical trace cases, abductions, photographs, witchcraft and fairies, MIB, the New Zealand films. It is well written and entertaining, and Robert Sheaffer clearly gets a lot of fun out of UFOs. But it is a pity that a man of such obvious intelligence has not seen through his own refusal to take the subject seriously, and has not devoted his energy to exploring the very real mysteries that remain after the heaps of UFO garbage are cleared away.

In complete contrast is **Hilary Evans'** attitude towards UFOs and indeed all unexplained phenomena. In only six pages in his book **Intrusions: Society and the Paranormal** (Routledge & Kegan Paul, large-format paperback, £5.95, 206 pages, illustrated with photographs and engravings, bibliography and index) he makes a number of important points, including: that many "witnesses" are sincere but subconsciously hoaxing; that the media attitude is worthy of sociological study; that fear is covered up by ridicule; that UFOs are a social phenomenon meriting scientific attention. Sheaffer concluded that UFOs do not exist; Evans comments that "It is no business of this study to take sides as to whether there is any substance to UFO reports" (p.190). If only all ardent UFO students, be they for or against, could adopt this latter attitude, ufology would be in a far healthier state than it is. Sadly many ufologists are not even aware of their bias!

Hilary Evans' unfortunately brief reference to UFOs in *Intrusions* hints of a book that maybe he will one day write — a study of 'how contemporary society deals with a paranormal problem' (p.184). His present book is largely a study of attitudes to the paranormal in the past, which may be of interest to students of the paranormal in all its apsects, but is unlikely to have the same impact on the general reader as would a book dealing with the unexplained phenomena of, say, the last fifty years.

Australian UFO researcher **Keith Basterfield** has written an interesting account of his own involvement in ufology: **Close Encounters of an Australian Kind,** subtitled "UFOs: The Image Hypothesis" (published by A. H. & A. W. Reed Pty Ltd, 2 Aquatic Drive, Frenchs Forest, Sydney, NSW 2086, Australia, price A$5.95, 112-page paperback). The two titles indicate the two main themes of the book: a description of Australian close-encounter cases (including a section of 30 pages of abbreviated reports), some of them investigated by the author; and an examination of a hypothesis which he feels can account for many, if not most, so-called UFO events (excluding of course those with natural explanations). This is the ability of some people to produce spontaneous imagery within the mind, which is so vivid that they confuse it with reality.

PERSONAL COLUMN

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FOR COLLECTORS! Are you interested in obtaining copy of only Yugoslavian UFO/Fortean publication? It is published in the Slovenian language. For details write to: Miloš Krmelj, Milčinskega 6, 61000 Ljubljana, Slovenija, Yugoslavia.

It seems likely that such a mechanism as this may account for some UFO events, especially those occurring at night when the witnesses are in their bedrooms and in a state between sleep and wakefulness, and also to people driving alone at night. But it is stretching the theory too far to try and apply it to the majority of UFO events, daylight cases and multiple witness cases especially. The author over-enthusiastically tries to persuade us that even such phenomena as visions, witches and fairies are a result of imagery, but if the phenomenon is so widespread as he would have us believe, then one must begin to doubt one's eyes: is anything you think you are seeing really there? Unfortunately the UFO phenomenon cannot be explained so easily, though Keith Basterfield has given us a valuable insight into the origins of certain types of reports.

Spanish-speaking readers will be interested to know of a new book published in Spain — **Los Ovnis y la Ciencia** (UFOs and Science) by **Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos** and **Miguel Guasp.** Dr Richard F. Haines writes in his Foreword that the authors have approached "the subject of scientific Ufology systematically, carefully, critically." Perhaps some English-language publisher will be inspired to publish a translation before too long, so that we can all benefit from the authors' experience. The Spanish edition, a 382-page softcover with photographs, illustrations and tables, is available from Plaza & Janés, S.A., Export Department, Virgen de Guadalupe 21-33, Esplugas de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain, price $9 (U.S. dollars) or equivalent.

Two books reviewed earlier in their hardcover editions and now available in paperback are: *Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World* (Fontana, £4.50) and *Direct Encounters* by Judith M. and Alan L. Gansberg (Coronet, £1.25).

MAIL BAG

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's fullname and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

Queries on the report of the 1954 BOAC sighting

Dear Editor, — The editorial leader in Volume 27, Number 3 of FSR contained some interesting notes pertaining to the classic BOAC case of June 29, 1954, off the coast of Labrador. But these notes also present somewhat of a problem because they present certain inconsistencies with previous data on this case that have come to my attention. In particular I refer to an article entitled "BOAC's Flying Jellyfish," written by John Carnell, that appeared in an issue of *Fate* magazine some months after the sighting occurred. Included in the article was an extract from the Voyage Report of Captain James Howard. This Voyage Report and your editorial leader conflict on a number of points. It is the purpose of this letter to point out these seeming contradictions, and hopefully a clarifying response from you will be in order.

One contradiction concerns the cloud cover. According to Captain Howard's Voyage Report we learn the following: "The visibility at this altitude was unlimited, with no cloud other than low overcast." Yet according to your editorial leader the BOAC aircraft was flying "... just below a layer of broken cloud ..." Also, that the large UFO "... appeared to be shape-changing while threading its way through the broken cloud ..." Was there broken cloud just above the Stratocruiser or wasn't there?

The contradiction that poses a major problem concerns the question of whether or not there was *radar confirmation* of the UFO formation? Obviously, this issue is central to this incident. Again, according to Captain Howard's Voyage Report we learn the following, "I spoke to Fighter Control and he said he picked us up at 01.13 G.M.T. (when we had the object in sight), but had nothing else on his screen but us," Yet according to your editorial leader the intercepting USAF Fighter "...reported radar contact at 16 miles, with two images showing up — presumably those of the aeroplane and the large object." Also, "... and these had been intercepted on radar by Control — as implied by the pilot being ordered to 'hold.'" This is a major disparity that has arisen, and one that demands a satisfactory resolution.

Incidentally, there is *no* mention in the Voyage Report of the long "hold" delay of the Stratocruiser cited in your editorial leader. Another unresolved question!

The BOAC case is far too important to allow these questions to remain. Your clarification of these matters would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Herbert L. Taylor,
3400 Fifth Street,
Oceanside, New York 11572
U.S.A.
January 3, 1982

[Please see Captain Howard's article elsewhere in this issue, and the editorial leader on page 1 — EDITOR*]*

A travesty of a Programme

Dear Sir, — I would like to voice an opinion on Thames Television's *White Light* programme which I saw on 13 November '81. I am a police officer, and although I was on duty, I managed to arrange my refreshment period to cover the programme.

And I assume many other people expected to see a debate on at least some well-known UFO reports.

I was disgusted by the way Gordon Creighton was treated by the so-called chairman, and the "gang" of teenagers who giggled most of the time. The big mistake was to treat these morons as responsible adults.

I thought Mr Creighton very polite

and calm and proved himself a hundred per cent gentleman. This subject can only be treated seriously and not "sent-up" by some fly-by-night trendy twenty-minute stint. One might have thought that the teenage audience was put there by the late Dr Condon of the late 1960s report fame.

Yours faithfully,
Michael Lambert
Ilford, Essex
November 16, 1981

This letter has been held over from the last issue of FSR but, although it is now late, for which I apologise, I feel it must be published. For, after all, it was a dreadful programme. — EDITOR.

A reply to Mrs Druffel

Dear Mr Bowen, — I read with interest Mrs Ann Druffel's reply (FSR 27/3) to my letter published in FSR 26/5. Let me answer her succinctly point by point.

The CIA's primary function is to gather and evaluate information vital to the security of the United States. By the late 1960s, the CIA reached the conclusion that the UFO phenomenon is of a *paraphysical* nature (i.e., *not amenable to scientific study)* and constitutes no danger to the United States.

The UFO photos which Mrs Druffel says are in USAF files may show material objects in flight, looking like spacecraft of an unfamiliar design, but let's not be fooled by their *apparent or temporary materiality*. The whole shebang was set up by the Paraphysical Intelligence to make us swallow the ET hypothesis. (Here I am also answering Mr E. A. Cureton). In face of this Extra-dimensional Superintelligence, the U.S. authorities are just as powerless as we are, so there is no point in accusing them of cover-up.

Despite her belief in Marian apparitions, Mrs Druffel apparently has never studied the famous Fatima affair (the *joint* appearance of the Virgin Mary and a UFO at Fatima, Portugal, on October 13, 1917). This event, recognized as genuine by the Vatican and also known as the "miracle of the dancing Sun," *involved the appearance of a discoid flying object whose descriptions by 70,000 eyewitnesses are identical with those of today's UFO sightings:* a clearly defined revolving disc; shimmery metallic look; hovering below the clouds; multicoloured rays; falling-leaf movement; rocking motion; instant drying of wet objects; strange (sulphurous) odour; take-off with lightning speed, etc. Since the term "Flying Saucer" or "UFO" did not exist at that time, the eyewitnesses mistook this object for the Sun. But the Sun never "dances." Moreover, it was raining at Fatima on that day. The VM was, however, visible only to three young children (Lucia, aged 10, Francisco, 9, and Jacinta, 7) who had already had five previous contacts with the VM (on May 13, June 13, July 13, August 13 and September 13, 1917).

Two well-known French ufologists, Jacques Vallée (cf. *The Invisible College*) and Paul Misraki (cf. *Des signes dans le ciel*), stressed the importance of the Fatima incident to the comprehension of the UFO phenomenon. And the Fatima apparition is by no means unique. Paul Misraki is a devout Catholic, but he unflinchingly accepts the VM-UFO connection. And your French counterpart *Lumières Dans La Nuit* recently ran a series of articles on the VM-UFO linkage (cf. LDLN 205, 206, 207, 208 and 209).

Mrs Druffel states that many close encounters with UFO entities often cause irreparable psychological/physical damage. She forgets that many such encounters have *also yielded beneficial results such as miracle healing.* Obviously, the so-called Good and Evil are skilfully mixed in these manifestations. This is just another way of the Paraphysical Intelligence to *put us off the scent.*

Mrs Druffel asserts that the Church never fears Truth about anything. Well, how about the infamous Inquisition that tortured and killed countless so-called "heretics" for more than 650 years? Galileo Galilei narrowly escaped being burnt at the stake for declaring what the Ancient Egyptians had already known 2,000 years before him: the earth rotates around the Sun. More recently, even Darwin and Einstein were vehemently attacked by churchmen.

And the *Third Secret of Fatima,* revealed to Lucia by the VM in 1917 but transmitted to the Vitican only in 1930, was to be made public in 1960. The late Pope John XXIII, however, decided to put off publication for 20 years, but in 1980, Pope John Paul II did not release it. Apparently, the Third Secret of Fatima frightened all the four Popes into silence. It presumably contains dire warnings about World War III and the demise of the Catholic Church.

I disagree with the multi-origin theory on the UFO phenomenon. The UFO and all other paranormal/religious phenomena are *transdimensional* manifestations of one and the same *neutral* Superintelligence located outside our four-dimensional physical/material universe of which we are eternal captives. All our scientific advances can only be made within the framework of our space-time continuum, and anything existing beyond it will forever remain out of our ken.

No, my letter is not pot-pourri. I take an overall approach to the UFO phenomenon (and not a fractionated one adopted by many ufologists). If the Irish were free-thinkers like me, there would be no religious turmoil in Northern Ireland. All fanaticism, religious or political, is not only absurd but dangerous.

The message which the UFO and paranormal/religious phenomena are trying to convey to us is that *we have to radically revise our ideas about so-called "God."* Mrs Druffel's views are parochial and conventional. Why should God be exclusively Christian?

Yours sincerely,
Julian H. Kaneko
18, rue Le Corbusier,
CH-1208 Geneva, Switzerland
December 3, 1981

Identifying Soviet sightings

Dear Mr. Bowen, — Regarding Creighton's account of the sensational June 14, 1980 Soviet UFO:

The reports are devoid of any truly useful information (such as azimuth, elevation, angular size, and actual GMT), being replaced instead with purely subjective (and notoriously unreliable) interpretations of distance and size and sub-object location. Experienced UFO investigators should recognise the futility of any attempted analysis based on such poor data.

The most fascinating aspect of this sighting is its apparent correlation with an apparition which occurred within an hour or two over Argentina just after local sunset. An orbiting object surrounded by a vapour cloud (venting propellants following rocket burn?) could easily account for the visual stimuli, but *which* object?

As I have attempted to communicate to FSR before, a useful line of in-

quiry is connected with Soviet secret space launches. The infamous Petrozavodsk "Jellyfish UFO" of Sept 20, 1977, turned out to be the launching of Cosmos-955 from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome (see the Christmas 1981 number of *New Scientist*), a solution quite happily accepted by the USA UFO community.

The June 1980 event occurred at a time of year when objects launched eastwards from Plesetsk are in sunlight (due to the solstice "White Night" phenomenon) and also visible as far south as 40°N lat. The most promising candidate is Cosmos-1188 booster stage; I am currently obtaining the tracking data needed to verify or refute this hypothesis.

Yours in research,
James Oberg,
Rt 2 Box 350,
Dickinson, Texas 77539
March 29, 1982

Gordon Creighton writes:— *The Russian UFO story was written by Henry Gris, not be me, and the responsibility for its accuracy lies with* him. *FSR is a form of discussion and I am a translator, in this case, of Gris's report, in order to make it available to our readers.*

We are well aware that the story lacks scientific details such as azimuth, etc. If, and when, we ever secure such, we will publish them. However, as Dr Pierre Guérin points out, it is worth remembering that plenty of scientists will still refuse to accept any evidence, however scientific (see my Crack in the Universe *interview with Guérin).*

As for the Petrozavodsk case our sources were Russian newspapers only, such as Pravda *(Truth). We published translations of what was being claimed. If it turns out to have been a terrestrial phenomenon (rocket launched on Earth) we shall gladly publish this. We have no emotional investment in Petrozavodsk or indeed in any other UFO case, nor do we* need *any emotional investments. Our case for the existence of UFOs is too good for* that *to be necessary!*

* * * * *

It so happened that on the day I discussed Mr Oberg's letter with Mr Creighton, an article had already been received at West Malling from Dr Pekka Teerikorpi of the Turku University Observatory in Finland. The article deals with the Petrozavodsk and June 14, 1980, reports from the Soviet Union. It was forwarded to me from West Malling a few days later. Readers who have not already done so, will read Dr Teerikorpi's notes ("Soviet 'UFOs' identified as satellite launchings") *elsewhere in this issue, and will see that Mr Oberg's observations have been confirmed. I am thankful that this matter has now been settled for us by a scientist who is prepared to look carefully at the evidence, and to weigh up the facts* for *as well as* against *that evidence, — EDITOR]*

A puzzle, more or less

Dear Sir, — Jenny Randles' books have impressed me with her attention to clarity and accuracy, but her letter in Vol. 27 No. 5 refers to 150% fewer UFO sightings in 1980 than a previous year. Was this a printing error? As I see it, if we take a figure, say 1000, then 100% of 1000 is 1000: so a reduction of 100% would mean that whatever the figure was, it was reduced to nil. It is when I am asked to visualise the figure being reduced by 150% that a gentle boggle starts up in my mind. Perhaps it means that there were so many fewer sightings that there were actually *more* than before?

Yours faithfully,
J. G. Halliday,
Maidstone,
Kent
April 10, 1982

On psychological and physical damage: also alien intelligence

Dear Sir, — 1. The letter by Ann Druffel on pp. 27-28 of FSR 27-3, is admirable indeed. May I, however, be allowed to add a few remarks to what Mrs Druffel wrote?

It is of course true that *many* UFO encounters have led to psychological and physical damage to *some* witnesses; in several of my articles published by the now defunct Canadian journal CUFOR (later merged with JUFO, Toronto), under the title "The Interpretive Dilemma" in 3 parts (CUFOR 4-1, 4-2, 4-3), I have discussed this matter of favourable *versus* unfavourable after-effects in witnesses. (The matter is far from being as simple as one gathers from Mrs Druffel's letter). There have been certain encounters which have resulted in a dramatic rejuvenation of the witnesses, and in an improvement of their I.Q. (cf. Maceiras in the Argentine, &c.). Therefore, it is somewhat misleading to attribute only *unfavourable* after-effects to UFO encounters. On the other hand, it is equally misleading to say that alleged Marian apparitions have yielded only beneficial results: one has only to read the Revd. Fr. Cristiani's little book on Satan, to see that undesirable things have on occasion occurred at such times, and in such places. One should, here, bear in mind also the hysterical screams of the bemused children who alone claimed to "see" the Virgin at Garabandal, in Spain; upon returning to their normal state, they were questioned about their former terror, and they replied that the Blessed Virgin had shown them some of the horrible things that would happen to this world. A committed Roman-Catholic will need to perform some theological rationalising, if he or she is to attribute such an apparition to *Divine* intervention.

2. Regarding the most interesting article on pp. 25-27 of FSR 27-3, by Mr Ahmad Jamaludin, dealing with the various levels of intelligence displayed by UFOnauts, might I remind readers of two things here:—

a) Mr. Aimé Michel's penetrating statement to the effect that, when we are dealing with a non-human (i.e. extraterrestrial) intelligence, we *must expect* that many of the entities' actions and reactions should seem "absurd", to us.

b) In FSR 16-6 (November-December 1970), I published an article called "UFOs and ESP," in which I discussed certain reasons why we may *think* that we are hearing our native languages spoken by UFOnauts. I followed this up with a further article entitled "A few coincidences and two postscripts," in FSR 19-3 of May-June '73. In Ostrander's and Schroeder's fine book *Psychic discoveries behind the Iron Curtain,* we find confirmation of my thesis, *viz.* that a sufficiently deep state of hypnotic trance can at times completely by-pass the language-barrier, leading us to "understand" statements made in a strange language, while we *think* that they are couched in our language. See also my earlier articles "F.S. Occupants and S.S.P." in CUFOR 3-1; "Where Cheshire Cats outgrabe," in CUFOR 3-6; and the above-mentioned three-part article "The Inter-

pretive Dilemma," in CUFOR 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, — for further discussion of all these matters.
Yours faithfully,
P. M. H. Edwards, Ph.D.,
Victoria BC,
Canada
December 1, 1981

That "sac of silence" surrounding MIB encounters

Dear Sir, — In Dr P. M. H. Edwards' article "MIB Activity reported from Victoria B.C.", (FSR Vol. 27, No. 4), the author made comment to the possible cause of the apparent lack of activity and signs of life during an MIB visitation.

May I provide an alternative suggestion?

A fly on the wall candidly witnessing an interview between a contactee and the MIB phenomenon would, I postulate, see the contactee apparently conversing with himself rather than with two or more gentlemen of whom we know so little. Around him, town or city life would continue to bustle along as always. To the contactee, all frames of human familiarity within his immediate environment would be grossly manipulated. A busy street or a city precinct would be devoid of people, traffic and any sort of movement and a state of limbo would exist within the mind of the contactee.

I feel that the MIB exist only as a subjective hallucination within the subconscious mind of the victim and created and controlled by the intelligence behind the UFO phenomena.

There have been many past cases involving MIB activity where no physical evidence has been found, where MIB, together with their means of transport, have mysteriously vanished into thin air and without a trace — much to the total amazement of the witness.

The hallucinary techniques I have mentioned could be carried out with ease by any talented stage hypnotist, and I feel sure that it's not beyond the technology of the intelligence behind the UFO phenomena to do likewise — but remotely.
Yours sincerely,
C. R. H. Shelton,
8 Newton Close,
Whiteparish,
Wiltshire,
SP5 2SP
February 9, 1982

Storms in a teacup

Dear Sir, — I am still attempting to fathom out the purpose of Pat Delgado's article in FSR Vol. 27, No. 5, entitled "Cheesefoot Head Mystery Rings." From the nature of the text one assumes that (Mr/Ms) Delgado was intending initially to investigate the cause of the circles, but reading it repeatedly only informs me that all that was achieved was to publicise them through the press and TV, thus creating misleading and highly speculative stories. Absolutely no regard was given by the author or the editor to the serious investigative work carried out in these very same circles by the Hampshire UFO Group, SCOPE, nor to the resulting article that appeared in *The Probe Report* Vol. 2, No. 3. (December 1981). To ascertain dimensions by measuring a small photograph shows a distinct lack of initiative, considering Mr/Ms Delgado was no more than a stone's throw from the circles themselves, and a trip down into them would not have been too demanding. Such actions would have shown that the actual diameters of the circles were 62 feet (not 52) and 26 feet (not 17), give or take an inch.

SCOPE's investigations were inconclusive, but assistance from Dr G. T. Meaden of the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation showed that a whirlwind explanation was very feasible, which became evident upon analysing weather conditions for the relevant period (again something that was ignored). The weather conditions, plus the geographical and topographical peculiarities of the location offered an explanation as to how such a formation of circles could be caused and full details of the mechanics were published in the aforementioned *Probe Report* and in Dr Meaden's Journal of Meteorology Vol. 7, no. 66.

What now concerns me is that the sum result of this inadequate contribution to your magazine could mean that people in the four corners of the world may now be under the impression that UFO activity caused mysterious circles in a Hampshire field, whereas in all probability UFOs are as far afield from the circles, as the circles are from the Joyce Bowles encounter which for some reason was marked on the accompanying map.
Yours faithfully,

Ian Mrzyglod,
Editor 'The PROBE REPORT',

[For the information of our readers, and Mr Mrzyglod, I record that our subscriber, Mr Delgado, drew my attention to the Cheesefoot Head mystery rings in a telephone call, and mentioned that he had alerted the TV companies to them. When he offered to obtain a photograph for me, I asked him if he would be prepared to write up a short note for me — which he did. Nowhere did he claim that the rings were made by a UFO, although he did mention that a "UFO Society" chairman had done so, only to be greeted with derision. He also mentioned other explanations that had been suggested. It will be noted that Mr Delgado rightly and properly refused to take the "initiative" and vandalise the farmer's standing crop by trampling his way down to the rings, which Mr Mrzyglod suggests he should have done. I am glad he avoided that because my main interest in this puzzling but somewhat inconsequential matter lay on the fact that three sets of apparently similar mystery rings lay in a straight line across the map of Hampshire. If they are all caused by tornadoes then stranger still! — EDITOR]

Reputed views of former NASA scientist

Dear Mr Creighton, — Thought you might be interested in these passages from Chas Berlitz *Doomsday 1999 A.D.* published by Doubleday & Co., Garden City N.Y., copyright 1981.

On pp204-5:— "Considering the difficulty of getting individual or other planets to understand a message it is evident that mathematics and geometry, existing independently of language and alphabetical or syllabic writing, would be a logical start. Maurice Chatelain, a prominent investigator of the French messages has pursued this theory to a startling conclusion. Within the angles and inner area measurement of a double hexagon reportedly left by a UFO at Marliens, Côte d'Or, on May 10, 1967, he has been able, through the use of trigonometry and a computer, to detect that the outer surfaces give Pi^2 in metres, and that the surface of the inner hexagon gives *Sq. root of Pi.* He has verified this independently of the metric system through measurements, comparisons, and the relationship of the angles involved."

Then on pp 206-7:— "In assessing ET communication with earth, Maurice Chatelain has the advantage of

considerable experience in communication through space. During the '60s, over a period of five years, he was Chief of NASA Communications Systems and, prior to that, Chief of Data Processing Systems at the North American Aviation Plant at Downey, California. Chatelain, like a number of other personnel at NASA, and other government agencies, no longer bound by security regulations, is definite about the presence of UFOs in space and their activities during the U.S. space shots."

According to Chatelain:— "All Apollo and Gemini flights were followed at a distance and sometimes quite closely, by space vehicles of ET origin. Every time it occurred the astronauts informed Mission Control who then ordered absolute silence."

In Chatelain's opinion, some of the space travellers may come from our own solar system, specifically from Titan, a planetary moon of Saturn having a physical condition among the planets most comparable to that of Earth. He points out that when our space probe passed over Titan its radio communication was interrupted and its photographic equipment stopped functioning almost as if it were passing through a security zone — but one not imposed by commands emanating from Earth.

You may already know Mr Chatelain, or at least be familiar with his thoughts on the subject. But if not, I thought you might like to follow up on these quotes. He sounds like a good candidate for an article in FSR. That line about "no longer being bound by security regulations" intrigued me!

Hope this matter will be of interest to you.

Yours sincerely,
(Mrs. J. E) Dorothea Havelin,
413 Rosemont Plaza,
Rosemont, PA 19010

Thoughts prompted by Dr Finch on Dinosaurs

Dear Sir, — The short article by Dr Bernard E. Finch, "Dinosaurs . . . Not Humanoids?" which was published in FSR Vol. 27, No. 4, prompts the following comments. Although I missed the original transmission of *Death of the Dinosaurs* I was sufficiently intrigued by the review of the programme, which was published in *The Daily Mail* the following day, to watch the repeat. The television critic of that newspaper had also noted the striking similarity between a model of a predicted twentieth century dinosaur and the aliens of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind.*

A remarkable coincidence, however, is one thing, and its interpretation another, so I would like to propose an alternative to the extra-terrestrial hypothesis suggested by Dr Finch. Consider the following points:—

1: The champions of the "nuts and bolts" hardware school sometimes assert that the UFO phenomenon must represent a technology that is a product of an intelligence far superior to our own (see p.18 of the same issue of FSR for example), and it is perhaps significant that if those great lizards had survived then their descendants would have enjoyed a further **sixty million years** of evolution.

2: The adaption of our alleged visitors to our environment is so remarkable that if they do indeed exist it is inconceivable that they did not evolve on a twin of this planet.

3: We know of just one planet, this one, where the dinosaurs demonstratably did exist, so why invoke a hypothetical alien alternative?

These considerations, and others, make me wonder if the UFO phenomenon ought to be interpreted as a privileged glimpse of what might have happened if history had run a different course, and if the apparent technology of the UFOs might be representative of a *terrestrial* rather than interstellar transport system. This may offend the staunch supporters of the extraterrestrial hypothesis, but it is not too far removed from the ideas of certain theorists, John Keel in particular, and it does have the distinct advantage of eliminating the question of interstellar travel from the problem.

Further evidence which tends to support this new hypothesis can be found in Sir Victor Goddard's *Flight towards Reality* (Turnstone Books 1975). He cites two well known cases of "time warp" experiences: his own, when he apparently flew over the airfield at Drem as it would be four years later, and the two elderly English ladies who allegedly saw the garden at Versailles as it had existed a century before. However, he then tells us something which does not frequently appear in other accounts (p.129-130) **The buildings that he saw at Drem in 1935 only ever existed on paper,** the ones that were actually built followed a different plan, and the eighteenth century garden of Versailles likewise never had a physical existence, **its only reality was a plan that was never implemented.** Sir Victor Goddard invokes his own pet theory of "thought forms" in order to provide his readers with some sort of explanation, but alternative time tracks are equally worthy of consideration in speculation of this order. As Damon Knight said in his autobiography of Charles Fort (***Charles Fort,*** *Prophet of the Unexplained,* Victor Gollancz Ltd 1971, p. 161):—

"It is perhaps easier to believe that all possible universes co-exist, side by side, in a five-dimensional space time framework."

Yours faithfully,
M. H. Martin,
39, Cradley Road,
New Eltham,
London,
SE9 2HD
February 7th, 1982.

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Continued from page 16

told the geologists that he would "give them 10 million years and not a day longer" for the age of the sun. Perhaps if Kelvin had been more of a philosopher, he might have pondered whether the fossils were telling him something. Likewise, perhaps we should ponder whether the UFO phenomenon is telling *us* something.

Mind and Matter

The UFO phenomenon is experienced largely through human consciousness and the human psyche. Laboratory physics attempts to work with "objective reality," but suppose there exists a class of phenomena in which subjective variables enter in the first order? How do we handle their study?

Eugene Wigner, the noted Princeton physicist, wrote that "the present laws of physics are at least incomplete without a translation into terms of mental phenomena. More likely, they are inaccurate, the inaccuracy increasing with the role that life plays in the phenomena considered ... As we consider situations in which consciousness is more and more relevant, the necessity for modifications of the regularities obtained for inanimate objects will be more and more apparent."

It is becoming increasingly apparent to those who seriously study the UFO phenomenon that some modification in approach and methodology is necessary. Do events in the mind represent interlopers from a parallel reality? Or, indeed, are they themselves such parallel realities? Should we look to distant star systems for the solution to UFOs or much closer to a metaterrestrial rather than an extraterrestrial hypothesis?

The paranormal or "psychic" aspects of the UFO phenomenon have generally been taken as sufficient reason for dismissing the entire subject, but such dismissal smacks of scientific irresponsibility. Erwin Schroedinger wrote: "A scientist should be curious and eager to find out." I would hold that we have accumulated enough UFO data over the past three decades to be truly curious about it.

To Explain the Inexplicable

There is indeed a growing, although still far from overwhelming, interest among scientists in the intriguing mystery of the UFO phenomenon — it just will not dry up and blow away as most of us once expected. In 1976, P. A. Sturrock surveyed the membership of the American Astronomical Society, asking whether the UFO phenomenon deserved scientific study. Among the 1,356 respondents, 23 per cent replied "certainly," 30 per cent "probably," and 27 per cent "possibly" — a total of 80 per cent at least mildly in favour. Seven respondents stated that they were actively studying the problem. Surprisingly (perhaps only to those unfamiliar with the UFO scene), 62 respondents stated that they had witnessed, or had obtained recorded evidence of, an event they could not identify and that they thought might be related to the UFO phenomenon.

Another recent example of scientific interest comes from the USSR Academy of Science. Preferring the term "anomalous atmospheric phenomena," Gindilis, Men'kov, and Petrovskaya report that "the substantial percentage of observers who have adequate qualifications attracts attention: scientific workers, engineers, pilots (52 per cent). Contrary to the widespread fallacy, there is a highly significant percentage of astronomers among the observers (7.5 per cent)."

Finally, attention should be called to GEPAN (Groupement pour Etudier les Phenomènes Aerospatiaux Nonidentifiés), a government-supported scientific team within the French space agency CNES (Centre Nationale des Etudes Spatiaux) that is systematically studying the UFO phenomenon. France is the only country to have officially undertaken such a project. (Characteristically, perhaps, only *French* UFOs are studied.)

When what was once believed to be a passing craze has instead proved persistent, provocative, and vexing, we may well heed the words of the astronomer Pierre Simon LaPlace two centuries ago: "We are so far from knowing all the forces of nature and the various modes of their action that it is not worthy of a philosopher to deny phenomena only because they are inexplicable in the present state of our knowledge. The harder it is to acknowledge the existence of phenomena, the more we are obligated to investigate them with increasing care."

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World round-up

of news and comment about recent sightings

England

Lozenge-shaped UFO watched by policemen at Milton Keynes

The national newspaper *The Sun* of March 25, 1982, told, in a report by John Kay, how, two patrolling policemen started a big security flap yesterday . . . after a close encounter with a mystery object in the sky.

"Ministry of Defence chiefs ordered a top-level probe into the lozenge-shaped UFO the cops saw humming and hovering over a town.

"They want to know if there are any 'defence aspects' to the sighting.

"The yellow-coloured object loomed into view in Saxon Street, Milton Keynes, Bucks., at exactly 4.35am.

"Patrolmen Sgt. Ian Victory and PC Anthony Underwood brought their Panda car screeching to a halt when they saw the object's flashing red and blue lights.

"The UFO gave off a low humming sound and they could clearly see its sub-structure before it vanished.

"Sgt. Victory, 45, said: 'They all laughed at us when we told them back at the police station. But I definitely saw it — and I've never seen anything like it before.'

"Milkman Richard Wait, 28, watched the UFO with the two policemen. He said: 'There was no way it could have been a plane.'

"Milton Keynes police chief Supt. John Burton said: 'These are two experienced officers and I've no reason to doubt their integrity.'

"A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: 'We are making a full investigation.'"

West Germany

Police report UFOs with light beams

According to a report in the newspaper *Abendpost Nachtausgabe* of March 17, 1982, Darmstadt received a UFO visitation at 9.30 p.m. on March 14. TV pictures were distorted, lights began to flicker, there was crackling on Police loudspeakers, and scores of eyewitnesses observed strange vivid green flying objects over Messel. Among the witnesses there were also eight policemen at Arhellgen.

The main excitement was along the Messel-Darmstadt motorway, where a number of UFOs were seen behind a clump of trees. The witnesses were four policemen. The five craft were elliptical in shape, with glass cupolas on the upper part and "searchlights", and were enveloped in "flickering green light".

The electricity in Darmstadt fluctuated strongly, and on the radarscopes at the nearby U.S. Forces Base the unidentified craft were visible for half an hour before disappearing.

T.V. Professor *Heinz Haber interviewed eyewitnesses on the local TV programme and said: "I don't believe in UFOs. The reports of things over Messel would naturally be found to have an explanation if we went into the matter." He agreed that extraterrestrial life probably existed, but considered it highly unlikely it could ever get here, owing to the problems posed by Time and Space.

Credit and thanks to reader **Werner Tiefel** of Mainz.

*Translation from German by **Gordon Creighton,** who asks: "What on earth is a TV-Professor? Is he an expert on the subject of Television, or is he one of the professional pontificators on all subjects of whom we have so many in Britain?"

East Germany

"Ufonauts" — but no UFO-encountered on the outskirts of Berlin

In a special report received from reader and UFO investigator Frau Ilse von Jacobi of Munich last November, it is learnt that a mystery object flew over East Berlin a few days previously, emitting green sparks and a good deal of noise. It landed near Bernau, 30 km N.E. of Berlin, in East German territory. According to the authorities of the Berlin Observatory it was simply a meteorite, while other versions suggested it was a Soviet rocket that had perhaps incurred damage or gone out of control. As it landed near Bernau it was rumoured to have caused an explosion, possibly through striking a factory.

Frau von Jacobi reports, however, that she had the great good fortune to interview a Berlin businessman, Hans Schlösser, a salesman for an electrical firm, who had an even stranger story to tell. He said that he and his fiancée had been in a bus which was coming from West Germany and was travelling along the West German *Autobahn* (motorway) at about the time of the alleged landing. Herr Schlösser, it seems, is not unfamiliar with the subject of UFOs, being an investigator himself, and he said that, near a bridge over the Autobahn, he and his fiancée, and all the other bus passengers, beheld two strange figures approaching. They were about 1 metre 60 cm in height, and clad in the glittering sort of silvery space suits and helmets that are so familiar a feature of UFO occupant reports. Each was wearing a chain which ran from the helmet down as far as his belt, and in their hands they each had an object described as resembling the *Stoppschild* (Stop! sign) carried by German railway stationmasters.

As the two personages slowly came down from the bridge on to the Autobahn, their appearance was so extraordinary that the bus driver slowed down to a walking pace so as to get the fullest possible view of them. The impression prevailing among the other bus passengers seems to have been that they were Russian astronauts, but Herr Schlösser would have none of this, and said they were assuredly UFO entities, since they looked just like the beings so many people claimed to have seen in close encounters. He said: "They must definitely have been the occupants of the UFO, who would on no account want to fall into the hands of the Soviets."

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